

## Interview with Mark C. Lissfelt

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MARK C. LISSFELT

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Q: Today is the 22nd of May 1998. This is an interview with Mark C. Lissfelt. This is being done on behalf of the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training, and I'm Charles Stuart Kennedy. Well, could we start? When and where were you born?

LISSFELT: I was born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1932, June 28, was raised there, went to public high school, stayed in Pittsburgh until I left to go to college in 1950.

*Q: Could you talk a bit about your family, in '32 sort of growing uin Pittsburgh at that point?*

LISSFELT: Well, I was the third of two boys, born in 1928, 1929, and 1932, Depression days, to my parents, both of whom were teachers. My father taught German and French at the University of Pittsburgh, but he also was the music critic for the Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph, the Hearst newspaper there for more than 25 years, and he also taught private piano lessons in our house. My mother taught private voice lessons and coached most of the people for the Pittsburgh opera and for the churches in Pittsburgh, also in our house, which incidentally contained at one time three pianos, none of which my brothers or I learned to play.

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Q: Obviously, the next question is was there much of a musical pass-down from these things?

LISSFELT: To the great frustration of my parents, I suspect they were disappointed in their offspring. My two older brothers were even more remote from music than I, who only used music as part of the Glee Club at Haverford College during my four years there (1950-1954).

Q: Growing up in Pittsburgh with a family who is engaged in music and teaching and all, was there much interest, as you were a kid, in the world around you outside of Pittsburgh?

LISSFELT: Yes, I guess you could say we were steeped in it. My father—first of all born on the south side of Pittsburgh, where his first language was German, living in a German community, the family running the local grocery store—knew everything more in German than English and had studied at the Leipzig music conservatory as a young man after the First World War. We heard nothing but these stories about travels and Berlin and Salzburg Festival and things like that, all our lives. And we had people at our dinner table, from Fritz Reiner, the conductor of the Pittsburgh Symphony at the time, on up and down. Some of the stars from around the world would come because my father was a critic and friendly with them and also spoke German as well as French fluently. So, we had this constant stream of the outside world, very much so.

*Q: You were still young, but did the Depression hit you? Does tharing a bell?*

LISSFELT: Well, you know, it must have been a terrible time to bring three young children into the world. And you can imagine a family that was living on private piano lessons! The first thing people gave up in tough times was the private piano lessons for their offspring. So it must have been very tough for my parents, and they were never considered a wealthy family - if I can understate the fact - in terms of monetary assets. But, you know, I have nothing but very happy recollections: a house full of music all the time, often to the

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distraction of young boys who wanted to go off and play baseball and do things like that (also, my father was an avid gardener, not sympathetic to football in the backyard).

Q: What about World War II, your father having this strong connection to Germany? You were at an age when you were reading and all that when World War II started. Did that leave any particular impression with you?

LISSFELT: Well, sure. First of all, my father was 42 years old when he got married, so he was beyond the age of being drafted and being part of the armed services of the United States, though he did serve in the Army in World War I. But teaching German at Pitt, he early on became part of what was called the ASTP, the Army Specialized Training Program, a wonderful program that trained these very talented young men right out of college taught German, French, and other languages before they went overseas. So we had this constant stream in our house of young men in uniform brought home for a good meal or the chance to use a washing machine in the basement. The other thing that we all participated in was collecting scrap iron tin cans and foil and things like that. My brother was an assistant air raid warden. We still have the metal hat that he would wear when he went out after dark. And some of our best friends won a prize for having prepared their basement best for a bombing raid, having knocked every inch of plaster off the ceiling and stocked water, sand, and food.. This was in Pittsburgh - far from enemy bombs!

Q: I am four years older than you, and I was scanning the skies during my summer holidays in Annapolis, Maryland, waiting for those German bombers, maybe even Japanese bombers, to appear over the horizon, which, oddly enough, they didn't.

LISSFELT: They didn't, and fortunately. Long after I had joined the Foreign Service, my father told me this story of his own consideration early in his life of joining the American diplomatic establishment. He was very interested in international affairs, traveled to Europe regularly, had at least two languages under his belt, French and German; but he told me as a young man that, in his generation, if you didn't have private wealth you had

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to dismiss any consideration of coming into the American diplomatic service. So it was remarkable how things have changed in one short generation, as witness my father and me.

Q: What about when you weren't going out and being a kid and playing ball and all that, did you do any reading? Did any particular thing sort of grab you?

LISSFELT: Well, I wish I could tell you that I was struck by certain books, but I was never a good reader, and that's all my life. I still read terribly slowly and retain very little, so I can't claim any intellectual stimulation there. But the whole ambience of the family aimed me toward public service, not going to what typically young men of Pittsburgh did, e.g., go be a management trainee with U.S. Steel. As a vignette, my mother met the mother of my lifelong friend in grade school, Johnny Adams, and my mother said, "How's John?" "You know, he's very well," replied his mother "He works in management training in U.S. Steel," and she was just beaming. "And what's your Markie doing?" My mother said, "Mark is joining the American Foreign Service; he's working for the State Department." The woman's immediate reaction was, "Oh, why did he have to do that?"

Q: *You went to high school in Pittsburgh, too?*

LISSFELT: A large public high school which we call Peabody (up in New England now, of course, it would be Peab'-dy), which was a very mixed body of local Italian residents, Jewish residents and a large African-American population, a school of about 1800 students.

Q: *How did the groups mix in those times?*

LISSFELT: Well, they didn't mix very well. I mean, there were what we called then race riots. And the Italians were known in my day as the "Red Onion Gang" and known to carry "shivs."

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*Q: A shiv being a knife.*

LISSFELT: There were some days when I left Peabody High - I would take the streetcar to and from home - I didn't live that close to the school - when I would go out on the way home a little anxious about getting to my streetcar safely, not that there were riots left and right, but one had some apprehension. My saving grace all through high school, I like to think, was that I helped a lot of the football team get through their courses, be it algebra or physics or whatever, and those guys kind of liked me, and I always had the feeling that they kind of looked after me, that nothing was going to happen to me. That's what I thought, and nothing ever did happen to me.

*Q: You graduated from high school when?*

LISSFELT: In February of 1950, and then I knocked around, did odds and ends, and went down to the Jersey shore, where I got a job by writing off to a manager at Flanders Hotel in Ocean City, New Jersey.

*Q: Flanders Hotel?*

LISSFELT: And I spent the next three summers happily working there as a busboy, among eight or ten busboys and 108 rather pretty waitresses.

*Q: Wait, now this was which hotel?*

LISSFELT: Flanders Hotel in Ocean City, New Jersey, right on the Jersey Shore, and it was a glorious way to spend the summer, totally unrelated to learning anything about international affairs or the Foreign Service.

*Q: Well, you're looking at the ocean, which you're going to be dealing with from time to time, and learning interpersonal relations with the gorgeous waitresses.*

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LISSFELT: That's it. Thank you. I needed that rationalization.

*Q: What were you pointed towards when you got out of high school?*

LISSFELT: In high school, I was probably thinking about law school, as a matter of fact. I had taken four years of Latin in high school and done very well. Everybody said, well, of course, Latin was a prerequisite for the study of law. That was a cliché in those days. But I didn't know. I wasn't going to be a musician, I knew that, and maybe teaching was the other thing in the back of my mind. The whole international affairs and the Foreign Service didn't come along until later.

*Q: Where did you go to college?*

LISSFELT: I went to Haverford College, which is at the other end of the State of Pennsylvania, 300 miles, roughly, away, outside of Philadelphia, a Quaker college, as it turns out, all male, 450 students at the time I was there. The reason I went there was that the older brother of my best friend was going there, and he was a brilliant mathematician and so forth, and I heard nothing but good things about the college. When you mentioned the name, people would say, "Oh, that's a wonderful place." So that's how one ends up going to college X, Y or Z, often. I also applied to Kenyon College in Ohio (which offered scholarships at nearby Pittsburgh schools) as well as to Swarthmore College, near Haverford and its traditional rival.

*Q: I would have thought it had been very difficult to get in. You must have done well in your studies.*

LISSFELT: Well, I was a grind in high school and took all the, you know, trigonometry and solid geometry and all that stuff and got A's and B's, but I had a very good record on paper and I was active, although not in sports. In school I played a lot of sports, but I weighed 125 pounds, so I wasn't going out for the football team at Peabody High School, I'll tell you. But I was pretty good at sports, if I do say so myself, but I never did it in any kind of a

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really organized way even in college. But that's why I went to Haverford College. I'm glad I did.

*Q: Were you at Haverford from '50 to '54?*

LISSFELT: That's it, graduated in June '54.

*Q: What did you major in?*

LISSFELT: Political science. I chose that major, really, because it was one of the strongest departments in the school. It had four very superb professors. You know the Quaker tradition, and that'll give you a little bit about Haverford. The whole orientation there is often public service, service to mankind and all that, so you get kind of imbued with that. Even the most obtuse of the students got some of that while they were there, and it tended to reinforce my idea of public service, but I didn't know what.

International relations began to appeal and the American Foreign Service kind of grew on me. By the time I left college I was interested very much in the Foreign Service.

*Q: Were outside events sort of impacting on the student body and you?*

LISSFELT: They sure were. The Korean War. The Korean War broke out June of 1950, almost on my birthday.

*Q: June 25.*

LISSFELT: My birthday is June 28, and I remember it very well, down at the Jersey Shore, where I was working one of my summer stints. I didn't know what the implications were at all, and of course, Haverford, a Quaker school, certainly had no ROTC unit. But many of my friends did flee to nearby Drexel Institute and joined up. They formed a squad down there and they called them the "Quaker dozen," because there were 13 of them in the squad that came down from Haverford and marched around. The closest I came to military

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service then was going down to the Philadelphia Navy Yard one day (I wore glasses since the beginning of my sophomore year in college for distance vision purposes) and having an interview for the navy V-12 Program, I think it was called. Fine, and I talked to an old petty officer, and he said, "You want to be a pilot, do you?" "Yes, I'd like to see what this program's all about." I replied. He said, "Do you wear those glasses very much?" I said, "No, only for distance vision." He said, "Get the hell out of here!" That was the shortest visit to the Philadelphia Navy Yard made in history. But luckily, for whatever reason, I never felt threatened by the draft, which was a real thing; but upon graduation, I did volunteer for the draft and went into the U.S. Army in November 1954 to fulfill an obligation and not having any other career plans at the time.

*Q: Well, at Haverford, did things like the McCarthy hearings, McCarthyism, have an impact then?*

LISSFELT: Oh, yes. I mean, we were very eager to get a busload of kids into Washington to protest at the drop of a hat. I can't say that I was ever one of those protesters, and I never went off and worked in a Quaker weekend work camp. I'm not proud of that, but that's a fact. But, yes, my senior year, we political science majors made a trip down to Washington in the spring of '54. One of the most important and memorable occasions was witnessing the Army-McCarthy hearings and being in the room. It was electric. Hundreds of people. Hundreds of people and that maniac berating a lawyer named Welsh, who was defending the U.S. Army. It was quite an occasion. I'll never forget it.

*Q: Being Haverford, was the faculty sort of pointed one way and the student body another? Sometimes this happens.*

LISSFELT: Not that I noticed, really. I really, even then, didn't sense this very much. It was a very liberal place, and they particularly were appalled by McCarthyism and all that stood for, but I'm not aware of tensions. I think probably the faculty and those vocal people in the student body were pretty much in sync with each other.



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*Q: This was a time when we were getting re-engaged, and the Korea War was sort of a wake up call.*

LISSFELT: John Foster Dulles was the Secretary of State.

*Q: Eisenhower was in; NATO was going strong. Were you taking an particular interest in foreign affairs?*

LISSFELT: Well, I was, as I said, majoring in political science, and the longer you went on, the more political science courses you took as you came toward your senior year, and I took a very good international relations course with a man named Phil Bell, who had worked with the State Department. And he used to criticize some papers I wrote by saying, "This would never be acceptable in the State Department. You have to focus." Things like that. "They'll want to know policy options." So there was that ambience for me personally. But I was goofing off like any undergraduate, like the worst of them, and more worried about the next date and how I was going to get to Bryn Mawr and back without a car and things like that, to be perfectly frank.

*Q: It sounds like you were not a typical student. I mean, most of us, you know, were really concerned about the world in those days.*

LISSFELT: Well, Haverford was crawling with people who were engaged, you know, and I took my daughter up there in December 1979 to apply to join when they took women into it. And she was accepted for the first female class, but she decided not to join. And in the car coming back, I asked, "Why, what's the matter?" And Jenny said, "Oh, the place is too small and there are too many creepy boys there." She'd been in the library. A very perceptive young lady. (Like her older sister, Sarah, she went to William and Mary in Virginia.)

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*Q: How about just to pick up attitudes, did the United Nations weigh heavily into your studies, in looking at it now?*

LISSFELT: Not heavily, but it weighed because of this professor, Phil Bell, and also another one named H. Field Haviland, who also taught diplomacy and international affairs at the college and then happily went on to Harvard. Both of them knew a lot about and were interested in the United Nations, but it didn't weigh heavily on me, no. And it wouldn't have weighed much at all without the presence of those two men, I think. And the library had its collection of UN documents. I'll never forget this big mess in the corner of the library because nobody knew quite what to do with this torrent of stuff that poured in. It may still be the case.

*Q: So you graduated in '54.*

LISSFELT: Right.

*Q: The Cold War was at its height then. It was always at its height for a long period of time, but I mean the Cold War was certainly underway.*

LISSFELT: Dien Bien Phu had just occurred-

*Q: Dien Bien Phu had just occurred.*

LISSFELT: -in June o'54, I took a trip around the United States that summer with a car that a German Fulbright student from Haverford with whom I became very good friends, Gerd Leisse. We drove over 10,000 miles around the country. But yes, Vietnam and Dien Bien Phu were very much in the headlines right then at graduation time.

*Q: Yes, it looked like we might be getting involved at one point.*

LISSFELT: Incidentally, our graduate commencement speaker was the president of Chicago University, chancellor perhaps, father of the Great Books Program, Robert

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Hutchins. His theme was "Idyllic Haverford: You Don't Know What the Real World Is Like Out There, Boys."

*Q: Well, what did you do after you left "Idyllic Haverford?"*

LISSFELT: Well, we made this trip around the States, but I'd already been in touch with my draft board in Pittsburgh, and frankly, the draft, for me, was a way out of what to do next. Many in my class went to medical school, dental school or law school. I didn't want to go to law school. I'd had enough of school, and I thought, Let me get this out of the way now. My father had been in the Army in the First World War and had wonderful tales to tell about it. And so I volunteered. You could volunteer for the draft in the terms of saying, "Please take me in November of this year." They would hold off and then they would take you. That's what I did. For two years I went in as an enlisted man in the U.S. Army in the beginning of November and ended up, fortunately, in Army Intelligence, what was called Counter-Intelligence Corps - CIC—at the time.

*Q: Where did you get your basic training?*

LISSFELT: Well, basic training, I went off to Fort Knox, Kentucky, a night train ride from Pittsburgh, from the downtown post office, which was an experience: you get off and suddenly you're in the Army, everybody telling you to get on that bus, do this, do that. Two glorious months at Fort Knox, Kentucky, which I don't recommend to anybody in November and December. It's the coldest I've ever been in my life, that was basic training! And marching daily up and down two hills, one called Agony and the other called Misery. Wherever we went, we went up and down Agony and Misery. That's my memory of Fort Knox, but also being very cold. It was Hell. But, God, did I get exposed to the Great American Public - illiterates, people who didn't wear shoes, hadn't worn shoes till they got in the Army, and lawyers - and they were all thrown together. It was quite an experience. I came away from that, by the way, a supporter of the draft.

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*Q: I have, too. It's unfortunate, I think, looking at the Foreign Service officers who come in. They don't have a clue.*

LISSFELT: I'm such an admirer of many things—not everything, but many things—about Israel—and it's where I served a couple of years with their compulsory service before anybody goes off to the university men and women. They become a little bit more mature, and I always thought that I could have matured a bit before finishing my college, for example.

*Q: When you went to CIC, where did they put you?*

LISSFELT: Well, we left Fort Knox knowing that we were going to Fort Holabird, which is just outside of Baltimore. That site is now a parking lot for Toyota trucks shipped in through the Baltimore port, incidentally. Fort Holabird was then the CIC (Counterintelligence Corps) training center, which was full of professors warning us about the “commie” onslaught and the “com-symp [communist sympathizer]” journalists and things like that. It was a riot. It was full of these young college graduates, enlisted personnel, you know, a lot of them bright—a lot brighter than I—were subjected to the Army's training about the “com-symp threat.” It was hilarious.

*Q: Yes, Communist sympathizers, yes.*

LISSFELT: Right. Thank you for translating that. So that went until May of '55, at which time, fortunately, I was sent overseas among the last troops to go to Salzburg, Austria. In May of 1955, the State Treaty had been signed with Austria, under which terms the occupying powers—us, the British, the French and the Russians—were to leave by, roughly, September. So we arrived as people were heading for the door, but we were part of the last force in Salzburg - glorious experience, glorious city - cleaning out the files, if you will, of the CIC operation, which was very much on the way out. And then we thought we were threatened with immediate return to the United States. You know, two teasing

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months in Europe, which I'd heard of all my life - but fortunately, most of us were sent to Germany. I was sent up to Stuttgart and ended up in fact outside Frankfurt - in Frankfurt first and then in Hanau, a suburb of Frankfurt, where I spent the rest of my military service.

*Q: This was in around what?*

LISSFELT: This would be '55 to '56. I went up there in the late summer or fall of '55, and a year later I obtained, by the way, early release for school after this period in Germany.

*Q: Let's stick to Germany for a while. What were you doing with thCIC in Germany?*

LISSFELT: I was an enlisted man under cover. We always worked in civilian clothes, and whenever we went to the field and had to wear uniforms, we wore no rank, nothing except - like war correspondents - we had two U.S.s on our lapels, and we carried our credentials, which when we'd flash in front of any mortal would send them - like FBI agents flashing their credentials would send most mortals—to their knees, trembling with fear, we'd like to think. But what we were doing was background investigations on people who were getting security clearances and periodic snap investigations of caserns and units to test their security, and more likely, security surveys of major caserns in and around Frankfurt for their fencing, their access controls, their handling of classified documents, all that kind of stuff.

*Q: Ever work on the Canberry Frips Casern?*

LISSFELT: No.

*Q: That was in Darmstadt.*

LISSFELT: No. We didn't cover Darmstadt. We did Gelnhausen, Hanau, and Bad Nauheim and of course Frankfurt itself. There were a couple of major caserns. At the first of the Fourth Infantry Division, by the way, of which I was very proud to be a member, the so-

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called IV Division of Normandy invasion fame. And then we stayed on when the third Armored came over to replace the Fourth Infantry.

*Q: What was your impression of Germany, I mean, doing the background investigations and all that?*

LISSFELT: Well, I was just dazzled because finally I'd gotten to this land I'd heard about all my life, you know, from my father, and the tales and the opera that he knew so well, the stories of his own adventures. I was just high on the experience. It was pretty battered, and Frankfurt was a mess, and Hanau had been 85% destroyed. I did get up to Berlin, which was a mess, a big mess. So it was a pretty mixed experience. The Germans were still - this was 1955, ten years after the war - struggling to come back, but they were doing mightily, and one had to be impressed by what was going on, and the beauty of the place, the beauty of the landscape in that country. We had a lot of these maneuvers in the countryside, you know, and we'd just look at these gorgeous well kept fields and rebuilt barns, and we knew the German love of order, and there it was in front of your eyes. It was very impressive.

*Q: Did you run across the Foreign Service at all while you were doing this?*

LISSFELT: Only in terms of pursuing entrance in the Foreign Service. The first exam I took I took just as I was graduating from college, which was in 1954, the last year they gave the three and a half day exam, which was an experience I'll never forget. I took that down at the Philadelphia Post Office. I'm not kidding: three and a half days. Oh, you took the same thing.

*Q: I took it. Actually, I took it in '53 in Frankfurt. I came from Darmstadt as an enlisted man.*

LISSFELT: I took it first coming out of college, when it was three and a half days long, and I came within a couple of points of passing the difficult thing, which really surprised me, but

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that was before I went in the Army. And then, while I was in the Army, I pursued taking the test and did take it a couple of times, even had an oral interview at the Frankfurt Consulate General, which was very convenient to where I was assigned. And I took the entrance exam, in fact, several times, because I passed and then I wanted to go to graduate school and I kept postponing that.

*Q: Did you take it in Frankfurt?*

LISSFELT: I think I took it there, and I took it in Deerfield, where I worked there.

*Q: I may have monitored you in '55 or '56. I remember I had the feeling that.*

LISSFELT: I don't remember taking the written there, but I probably did because I had to start over again, having failed the first time around. And then it was one day long, but it was tough as the devil, that multiple choice - you either knew your stuff or you didn't know your stuff, because there were two or three answers that were approximately right. I'll never forget that, thinking I'm going to breeze through, but... Then I was interviewed by the consul general. I had an oral interview there. His name will come to me.

*Q: John Burns?*

LISSFELT: John Burns, yes. He was from Oklahoma, another very nice, distinguished man. We had a very pleasant oral exam, and I think on that occasion I passed, but then I was still in the Army. And then I wanted to use the GI Bill, and the Foreign Service got very impatient with me, as they can, saying, "Look, you either come or you start the process over." Which I eventually did.

*Q: You got out of the military in '56.*

LISSFELT: Two months early, by applying for early release because a friend of mine and I got the idea to go to Paris, where you could go on the GI bill, depending on which school you entered. And I went off in September 1956, ahead of this fellow. He couldn't get out

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quite as early as I. I went a month early and arrived in the city not knowing more than two words of French. It was quite a good experience.

*Q: What did you do? For how long were you there?*

LISSFELT: I was there a school year, and I was at the part of the Sorbonne called the “Higher School for Teaching Teachers of French from Foreign Countries.” And why there, and not the Alliance Fran#aise or something like that? It was one of the few that was accredited by the Veterans' Administration. And it was full of guys goofing off, doing sculpture or doing girls or doing whatever, and a few of us nerds who were making a serious effort to learn some French. I did that for a year, and it was a great experience, right in the Sorbonne, the old Sorbonne building. That was a very interesting year.

And from there, still on the GI Bill, I applied to Fletcher School. I had applied to Fletcher School while I was still in the Army, by the way, and to Harvard Law. And I got accepted to both for entrance in the fall of '56 before I'd decided to go to Paris. So I came to a crossroads there in my career, and I decided, knowing how unhappy my classmates were from Haverford at Harvard Law, that it was a horrendous experience that I wasn't going to go through it. So I took that road to Fletcher, not Harvard Law (I came to a fork in the road, and I took it, as Yogi Berra would counsel.)

*Q: What was the problem? Why the unhappiness of Haverford studentat Harvard Law?*

LISSFELT: Well, I'm generalizing from the few that I knew, a few roommates, and it was during their first year. I went up and visited them, from Fort Holabird, as a matter of fact, while I was in the Army. The first year of law school anywhere is a horrendous experience, but Harvard is unbelievable, in terms of the pressures, and I'll never forget staying in the dorm there. I was going to sleep on the floor of the room of a roommate of mine in college, and we went in there - it must have been 2 a.m.—we'd been out having beers - and he said, “Listen.” And all you could hear was typewriters going. This was 2 a.m. in the morning. He said, “Do you hear that? Those are my neighbors up and down the hall



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briefing cases.” And this goes on every night until about four o'clock, and they pass out and they get up and they go to class, and they go on with this day after day. The pressures were just horrendous.

Q: Well, having determined to seek something other than law and diplomacy, you went to Fletcher. You were at Fletcher from when to when?

LISSFELT: Well, let's see. I was in Paris from '56 to '57. I got a certificate from the Sorbonne. That's what you would get at the end of that year. I came back thinking of the masters' program in one year, which they still have. That would have been '57 to '58, and then I decided to return for the second-year program, which they still have, for Master of Arts of Law and Diplomacy, it's called, M.A.L.D., thinking of going on for a Ph.D. But I got into that second year at Fletcher, and I really realized what I should have known earlier - that I wasn't destined to be a scholar, much less a Ph.D. candidate. So I did that just for the second year and got a second M.A.

Q: *Can you talk a little bit about Fletcher? What was your impression?*

LISSFELT: Well, it was a wonderful place. It still is a wonderful place. Fifty students were taken in each year, very small, full of lots of foreign students, including four or five Pakistanis. The whole entering class of the Pakistan Foreign Service went to Fletcher and is doing it again now, although they stopped at one time. Japanese, Indians, Yugoslavians - people from all over the place. Probably 30 per cent of their student body then, and it's higher now, were foreign. And we had wonderful teachers in basic courses in diplomacy, international economics, and international law and organizations. Those were the three sort of general courses, and you had to take selections out of each. Four courses a year, wonderful teachers. The late Ruhl Bartlett taught American diplomacy. Leo Gross, who I think is still alive, taught international law and international organizations. He was a terror. And a man named George Halm taught international economics. That was basically the faculty of Fletcher then; now they probably have 25 or 30 faculty members and are taking

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in 100 students a year. It's quite enlarged. It's not large, but it's larger than what I would have experienced and probably different in some respects for that reason.

*Q: What about the Americans who were there? What were they aiming towards?*

LISSFELT: Well, interestingly, all sorts of things, including business, including teaching and just a handful for the American diplomatic service, to my surprise. I think in my class, maybe five, out of 50, went into the State Department. You also had some people who went into USIA.

But it was a wonderful atmosphere. It was international relations at the graduate level with no distractions for extraneous courses, plus the attraction of Boston and Cambridge and all that meant in terms of diversions. Wonderful speakers all the time. So it was pretty hard to stay focused. The most important thing that happened to me at Fletcher - by far - was meeting my future wife. She was a senior at Tufts—Jackson College, as the female part was called then - and serving table for her meals in the graduate dorm. And she's been feeding me well ever since. I wouldn't want her to hear that.

*Q: I've been conducting a series of interviews with Winston Lord, and he said the same thing.*

LISSFELT: He was just a year or so ahead of me. That's where he met Betty Bow.

*Q: That's what he said - it was the greatest thing that happened to him.*

LISSFELT: I've heard him say that from a public platform, and I've chided him about it, because I know Winston, and I told him, I said, "I'm only glad that my wife wasn't around there yet when you met Betty Bow." My wife knew Betty Bow as an undergraduate at Jackson College. And he looked at me, "What year were you there?" He remembered my wife. Anyway, they were still married 38 years later.

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*Q: Had you taken the Foreign Service Exam while you were there?*

LISSFELT: Yes. The fall when I arrived, I had the most unsettling experience. I passed the written, and I was scheduled for the oral. I went to downtown Boston only to discover that the oral process had changed drastically. It became almost adversarial. It was not a collegial thing with three nice gentlemen across the table from you asking you softball questions. It was very much more penetrating and, frankly, I was taken aback. And I didn't pass. And they told me why: "You need to brush up on this; you need to be more sharp on that." But it was very upsetting; I couldn't believe it. Having passed the oral and having been accepted once, you know, this was going to be a shoo-in. It wasn't.

*Q: Do you remember any of the questions during that time?*

LISSFELT: I mentioned something about a background in music, liking music, at the beginning of the oral, I liked classical music. And then they began asking me about classical music, and very quickly they found that I didn't know anything much more than a good listener knows. I mean, they had a way of peeling back the leaves of an onion and getting to the core of it. It was very tough. And I thought to myself when it was over, How unfair! So that sent me back to the drawing board.

And I did start again and, of course, took the exam, but after Fletcher, the year I was getting ready to leave Fletcher, of course, they didn't give the exam. It was one of those years. So I went off for a year as a master at Deerfield Academy in the heart of Massachusetts, which was an experience.

*Q: Let's talk a little bit about Deerfield.*

LISSFELT: Sure, it's a fascinating whole experience. I wasn't married yet, although we became engaged while I was there. This would be the fall of 1959. Incidentally, I'm just now reading Richard Goodwin's book, called Remembering America: America of the Sixties, which talks all about this period, and when he was a young man out of Harvard

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Law he was investigating the quiz shows. Remember the quiz "\$64,000 Question" and the "Fix" involving scholar Mark Van Doren?

Q: *Oh, yes.*

LISSFELT: And where did Mark Van Doren hide out when he wanted to get away from the press and disappear? It turned out he was hiding at the Deerfield Inn while we were there.

Having gone to a big public high school in a big city, and while there was a very good private school there - still is - called Shadyside Academy in Pittsburgh, where some of my friends went, to my great, sort of, envy, for probably all the wrong reasons. But I thought that private school was the next step to heaven, for secondary school. When I got to Deerfield and learned a little bit about private school atmosphere from the point of view of an adult, a master and not a boy, I think I concluded that, while private school was a good experience, private school, for some people, it was a disaster for many and not good for a lot. We were up in the woods. Many of these kids up there - not most of them, but many - were sent off there by their parents who didn't want to raise them, or they were troubled kids. Of course, they had a headmaster named Frank Boyden, who was in his 60th year as headmaster-

Q: *I was going to say Frank Broaden was-*

LISSFELT: He was headmaster until 1968. I had one year under that old shrewd Yankee's tutelage, but I learned in the course of that year - where the faculty, first of all, were treated as if they were necessary evils rather than essential to running a good school - and going to faculty meetings - they were such a joke! I think I became a little bit of an agitator and known as such, because I was so incensed at being treated this way, and said so.

Q: *Was this Boyden?*

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LISSFELT: Oh, yes, Boyden's style - it wasn't a style, but he just cared for the boys, and the masters were incidental. And I didn't think I was incidental, and I thought these grown men sitting around like bumps on a log who had become incidental from being there too long were pathetic. I was influencing, I like to think, some of the younger guys who came along. I could see them getting started in a rut that I wasn't going to get in because I knew I wanted into the Foreign Service and while there took the written and went in and took the oral at spring break. Suddenly I got a call in May to come and join the Foreign Service in June of 1960, which I did. But in the meantime I'd gotten engaged in the fall. State Department Office of Personnel called, "We're putting together a class June 13th. Could you come?" And I said, "No, I'm engaged to be married on June 25th." And the sensitive member of the Personnel staff of the Department of State said to me, "Well then you'll want to cancel that, or postpone it." I said, "No." That was her first reaction.

*Q: Tell me about the oral that got you in.*

LISSFELT: That was in Washington. It was much less penetrating because the men were less sharp, frankly - three men who interviewed me - and the most memorable part of it for me was when it was all over and the chairman knew I was at Deerfield. He came from Massachusetts, and he wanted to talk about Deerfield. I wanted to know did I pass or did I fail. I finally had to ask him, Mr. Chairman, can I interrupt this dialogue, and ask have I passed?" "Oh, yes, incidentally, you have. Didn't we tell you," he replied.

So I passed, and they said, "You'll hear from us." And then suddenly, a matter of weeks later, I did hear from them. They suddenly put these classes together, as they do, you know, from time to time, in desperation, and around June 13th of 1960, I came down to Washington. Two weeks later, I returned to Ayer, Massachusetts to be married. The third week in the basic officers course was the week away from family, if you remember. You had to leave spouses, children and everything else for a week-long "offsite," so off I went,

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this newlywed, and spent my honeymoon with the gang at Front Royal, leaving my wife in Northern Virginia. That was our honeymoon.

*Q: Can you describe your class a little?*

LISSFELT: We were about 21. One was a woman, Margaret Beshore, who became our first "Madam Ambassador," to her great credit. She did it, incidentally, by marrying a guy when she was a young vice consul down in Panama. He happened to be the Pol-Ad [political advisor], a senior officer with the rank of ambassador.

*Q: Pol-Ad being 'political advisor.'*

LISSFELT: Yes, in one fell swoop, shortly after arrival, within months of arriving, anyway, at her first post as a young vice consul, she was Madam Ambassador. We used to kid her about that, but she was a wonderful girl, out of the Justice Department and a very balanced person. We had a very mixed group in our entering class. We did have one black. As a matter of fact, he happened to come from Haverford a couple of years behind me - Jim Baker, whom I knew, a very fine guy, and the rest of us were a mixed bag from scattered geography. I remember we even had a guy from Nevada, who incidentally was captured by the Viet Cong and spent years in prison in Vietnam.

*Q: What was his name?*

LISSFELT: Doug Ramsey. He survived the experience, and he had the kind of mind that probably drove his interrogators absolutely crazy - circuitous answers to all questions, and brilliantly done. Now other than that, it was a mixture of a few lawyers, one or two brilliant Harvard graduates. The first ambassador in our class was Hume Horan, who came in knowing Arabic and has since had a brilliant career in three or four posts as ambassador. He was headed clearly for higher things. Another fellow, good friend of mine, Norm Anderson, who became ambassador to Sudan in recent years, came in knowing probably five or six languages well, and you know, of course, what his first assignment was in the

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foreign service: it was to Personnel, where he would be responsible for assigning people to language training at FSI. We had one or two who left probably within the first weeks of their employment, having been sent off to do “biographic information” in the old library building there on 23rd Street and finding that, having been a lawyer—fellow came out of Pittsburgh, I remember one of them, suddenly filling out three-by-five cards on obscure people in what was then Biographic Intelligence Office wasn't what he thought the Foreign Service was going to be. So it was a mixed bag.

*Q: Did the Nixon-Kennedy election have any impact on your...*

LISSFELT: Well, we just felt, my wife and I both, this was so exhilarating, she being from Massachusetts, by the way. I mean we were totally in love with the Kennedy myth, or mythology, or whatever you want to call it. And we thought, What a time to be entering international affairs! And it was. It was a glorious time. It was so exciting to be in Washington, and we were there for the first two years of our foreign service career. Having requested an assignment overseas anywhere in preference to any assignment in Washington, we were, naturally, assigned Washington. But those were exciting times, heady times, you know, although we never went near the White House and didn't know the Kennedys and all that, but you just felt you had entered a profession at the right moment. It was heady stuff, and then, of course, came the murder on November '63, and like everybody else, we were just crushed.

*Q: What was your first job?*

LISSFELT: The first job was in Washington as a staff assistant, which meant a “gopher” - errand boy, glorified - in the office of what was then called the Deputy Undersecretary for Political Affairs—which was headed by a man named Raymond Hare, a distinguished Arabist who went on from that job to be ambassador to Turkey and then resigned and has died in recent years—working directly for a wonderful man, the late Frank Meloy, who was shot and thrown on a garbage heap in the summer of '76 in Beirut. At that very moment,

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he was trying to get me to come out there as his political counselor. Frank was my first introduction up close to the Foreign Service. And I just did what—sorting paper, sorting telegrams, and the mass of paper and trying to keep the deputy under secretary informed.

By the way, Raymond Hare, in his interview with me, was such a cordial wonderful man. I'll never forget the interview. He simply said, "Well, why don't you come in here and try it out and see if you like us?" I was rather touched. So I became devoted to him, and then Alexis Johnson came along with the change of Administration, and Frank Meloy stayed on, and I stayed on in that job for two years, a little bit more than two years.

Q: In the first place, how does Frank Meloy operate and what were you getting from him? This was your first look at the Foreign Service professional, certainly at a high level.

LISSFELT: I don't know whether you knew Frank Meloy, by any chance. He was one of the most distinguished, elegant bachelors in the town—very keenly dressed, handsome, tall man, extremely smooth and polished, the most polite man I think I've ever met in my life, soft spoken, but a spine of absolute steel. He's one of the toughest men I ever knew or worked for, and had such a nice glove on top of that iron fist that most people didn't know when they'd been hit. That was one of his great abilities, so I, as you can sense, had great respect for the guy and affection as well. He treated me almost like a younger brother. He was very kind. He introduced me to everybody, took me to the Metropolitan Club to see what that was all about—and for a kid out of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, that was quite an exciting experience—and helped look after my onward assignment. And it was no accident that I ended up going to London, although I was first assigned to Martinique until a last-minute cable came in saying, "We don't need a second vice consul in Martinique." And somebody in London needed an extra person, and off I went.

Q: Did you notice a difference between the short time you were there during the Eisenhower administration and then the Kennedy administration?



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LISSFELT: Dramatic difference.

Q: Could you talk about that? I think one of the great benefits of this program is we catch people at early age seeing the situation and not used to the bureaucracy, and I think that's one of the great benefits of talking about early careers.

LISSFELT: Well, the change couldn't have been more dramatic. I mean, I came in, as I said, in the summer o'60, prior to the elections, and people were very focused on the election and politics, but it was the end of the Eisenhower Administration, which was, to put it mildly, really winding down. Dulles had died, and the Deputy Secretary, Christian Herter, had become Secretary of State - whose name appears, by the way, appears on my basic commission when I came in. He was Secretary oState, a man of great character, whom I used to see leaving in the evening. You know, he walked with arm braces; he was severely crippled.

Q: *Arthritis, I think.*

LISSFELT: I don't know what it was, but to watch him leave that building was to see a study in courage, believe me. But Washington was quiet. It was dead, because people were sort of marking time till the election. And then suddenly this Kennedy gang hit town, and we had people like Arthur Schlesinger, Richard Goodwin - you name them - in and out of the offices, and one of the last persons named by the new administration was the replacement for the deputy undersecretary for political affairs, Dean Rusk became secretary of state and called back from Thailand one of his former deputies in the Far Eastern Bureau, Alex Johnson, worked like a dog.

But the pulse and the speed of the place just went from idling to high gear almost overnight. It was quite scary because it was sort of catch-as-catch-can and helter-skelter. Organization wasn't one of the major preoccupations of anybody. People trying to find out

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what the Kennedys wanted and where they were going. But it was pretty heady times, I'll tell you.

Q: I'm just thinking about people like Stephen Smith, who was an in-law of the Kennedys who was kind of running around. I've heard people say, "Keep him away from you."

LISSFELT: Stephen Smith and Richard Goodwin, maybe at different times, ended up having to do with Latin American policy in the Department of State, and I can remember, again, the late Frank Meloy, who was very devoted to principle and the United States - he was a great patriot - taking these guys in hand, and I could see it happening - taking them to lunch and sitting them down and then saying, "Look, you're not running around running an election campaign. This is now the U.S. government. We have to administer programs, and foreigners have to know where the United States stands on this or that issue." I know he spent a lot of time establishing friendship with these people, but also that core of steel said to them, "Get serious." And some of them didn't get serious. Stephen Smith didn't stay very long. For whatever reason, he went off.

Q: *I've heard, you know, sort of minor allusions to Stephen Smith being an extreme lightweight who was more of a trouble than not.*

LISSFELT: I couldn't characterize his contribution. I was never in a meeting with the man. I had never heard him speak except when I was perhaps introduced to him by Frank. I just know that Frank Meloy and his good friend Luke Battle, who is still very much alive, a wonderful guy who was Executive Secretary of the Department of State, took very seriously the responsibility to sort of get things in hand.

Q: *Did you have a feeling about Johnson compared to Hare?*

LISSFELT: Well, Alex Johnson was a workaholic. He's recently died within the last year.

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Q: Yes.

LISSFELT: And very serious guy whom Dean Rusk trusted implicitly. They were old friends and colleagues, and Johnson had a lot to do with the military and a lot to do with the Cuban Missile Crisis, [which] came along at this time. He worked with the Assistant Secretary for Latin America, Ed Martin. They were very instrumental in carrying out the instructions of the Ex-Com, as we called it, the Executive Committee of the White House, deciding what to do about the Cuban Missile Crisis. But the funniest thing about Johnson in our office - and this is a little personal vignette: he could never get my name straight. He could remember Mark, but he couldn't get Lissfelt, and it used to become an office joke, to see if we could all - in our lighter moments - maneuver him into having to introduce me to somebody or somebody to me, to see how it would come out. It really was a source of great hilarity, and the closest he ever got was, I think, one time introducing me as Lisbeth, or something like that. And I never had the relationship with him where I could say, "By the way, you really..." where I could tell him this. No, he was an august, hardworking, rather austere presence for me as a young FSO-8.

Q: Thinking of a couple of things that happened - this was, obviously, '61, '62 - a couple of major things: one was the Berlin crisis. Kennedy went to Vienna, the Berlin Wall went up-

LISSFELT: August '61.

Q: -Kennedy was calling up the reserves. I remember - I was in Washington at the time - we were thinking in terms of, you know, Should I stay in Washington, or should I send my family off to North Dakota or someplace a ways from-

LISSFELT: It was scary, particularly the Cuban Missile Crisis. That was a time when, by the way, even though I was working in that office, I didn't know what went on. I was shut out. So few people knew that there was a crisis going on, and Johnson was going to his Ex-Com meetings and then rushing back with various instructions, and he would work with

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Frank Meloy and the Assistant secretary for Latin American Affairs, Ed Martin, and I wasn't in the room. I wasn't privy to what was going on; I never saw the documents; but I knew something was going on. I was kind of scared, I'll tell you, because they looked terribly earnest.

Q: Did you notice the Bay of Pigs? That was shortly after Kennedy came in. I think that was sort of the spring of '61 or something like that.

LISSFELT: A funny thing. I don't have many memories from the office about that except the feeling that a terrible mistake had been made and here was this wonderful administration, which we worshiped—you know—what a way to get started! We had this feeling that they'd made a terrible false step and here was the President trying to recover.. And we looked terribly dumb, and I know we used to wonder, What have we - we, young officers - gotten ourselves into. People don't seem to know what they're doing. It's kind of scary. We didn't have any views on the CIA or anything then, other than what we'd had from college, so we didn't know anything about that.

Q: *What did you feel about the CIA, by the way?*

LISSFELT: Well, then I hardly knew much about it. Johnson was the man who approved all the covert action things that had a relationship to or might have foreign policy implications, but that was handled by a separate person in a separate office, and I was never privy to any of it - and perhaps just as well. I never saw any of the documents.

Q: Did you find yourself in retrospect falling into the problem that some staff assistants do, that you were a pretty heady guy, I mean, running around saying, "We want this," and that sort of thing?

LISSFELT: You know, I was coached by Frank Meloy early on. He said, "You know, you can make a lot of enemies in this job, which will last you your career. You'd better watch it." And I wasn't by personality inclined to be bossy, I don't think, and I was pretty

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intimidated by a lot of these people, so more often than not I was carrying instructions around saying, "Now, would you please do this for Alex Johnson," or for a higher-up, not "We need this now." And I had only one or two rows with people, and I can't even remember who they were because it was just - everybody was very cooperative. When somebody came from the deputy under secretary's office they only wanted to get it straight and what the deadlines were and what was needed, and if they didn't agree with something, they wouldn't take it out on me. The boss would call Johnson and get it straight.

*Q: Did you see any of your colleagues falling for this, because it happens with the MFC, too.*

LISSFELT: Oh, yes. It was the obvious pitfall that many people fell into. You know, we moved into the new building just at this period. August of 1960 was the move over to the new building, and the talismans that one wore if one were really a mover and a shaker were scrapings from the brand new carpets which showed on the rear of your cuffs. I'm not kidding. These became prestige items.

*Q: Oh, I know this. Oh, the blue lint.*

LISSFELT: The blue lint. This was, you know, people could see that, and they knew where you came from.

*Q: Because the blue carpets were from the-*

LISSFELT: -inner sanctum - the seventh floor of the new building (known as "New New State").

*Q: -inner sanctum of the Secretary's, and the blue lint on the back-*

LISSFELT: Oh, I remember that so vividly, and then one got to the stage when one had a key to get into the inner sanctum there, through the back corridors by a side door.

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Q: Yes.

LISSFELT: Then again, there were a few bossy people but, you know, when I think about it, the scrapes were with people further down the line rather than any of the... I mean, there were people like Alan Holmes, very distinguished guy with a very distinguished father. Brandon Grove was up there. Sam Lewis and Nick Veliotos. These were the people working around Chester Bowles.

*Q: And all, except for Alan Holmes, I've interviewed the others.*

LISSFELT: These were extraordinary people, with giant careers, whom I had nothing but respect for. And Arthur Hartman was another. He was so cordial to me I couldn't believe it. And then later over the years. Ted Eliot was another one. He was Dillon's special assistant, and those names, and these were impressive people in their own rights and none of them, as I recall, had any kind of a chip or abused their positions. You couldn't get away with it. You wouldn't last.

Q: After this, I take it that one of the things that being with principals like this and being a staff assistant means is that you can do something about your next assignment. What happened?

LISSFELT: There were of course, that went with this, long hours at the office, and for a staff assistant, much of it sitting around doing nothing, waiting for the day to end. And I was usually there from 8:00 to 8:00.

*Q: How was your wife's job?*

LISSFELT: Well, she wasn't too keen on this. She got a job at the Washington Hospital Center, as it turned out, working in personnel. We lived in Northern Virginia, and that hospital is up in the far north of Washington, and she used to make a number of trips in to get me, and the worst of which was Kennedy Inauguration Eve. There was a terrible

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snowstorm in Washington and she was alone in the car coming and going through that. Well, she's a very tolerant person, but there were moments when I didn't enjoy it, to put it mildly. But there was this prospect of help. One thing about Alex Johnson, who had a son in the Foreign Service, Stephen-

*Q: I've interviewed him.*

LISSFELT: And Alex would have nothing to do with the personnel process. Frank Meloy knew that he could help, but I was assigned to Martinique very much on my own. It wasn't exactly a choice assignment. It was to go down and be the second man in a two man post, which fell through, as I alluded to earlier, because the consul general suddenly had an overcomplement of junior officers and wrote, "We do not need two junior officers; it's hard enough for me to find work for one." This came in after we had been out getting ready to buy summer clothes, buy rattan furniture and put ourselves in hock for the first time in our lives. Fortunately I'd made no commitments. Suddenly this "Don't send him" message came in, and the same day arrived a bleat from a fellow named Findley Burns, whom you may have interviewed, in London, administrative counselor, saying he'd just lost this guy who ran the Visitors' Bureau, Gordon - I forgot his last name - who is since deceased, who had been taken back to Washington by McGeorge Bundy, to work with him in the NSC. So to make a long story short, they switched a few assignments, and the next thing I knew, we were assigned to London. Frank Meloy broke the news to me as only he could, having been to London at the Imperial Defense College, knowing what fun it was going to be. And off we went to work for Findley Burns for two years running the Visitors' Bureau and the embassy's "non-appropriated fund activities, i.e., cafeteria, dining room, lounge, and wine mess.

*Q: So you were there '62 to '64.*

LISSFELT: That's right. We arrived in November, just about Thanksgiving time, in 1962.

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Q: What was the ambassador like?

LISSFELT: David Bruce - wonderful man. I met him two or three times only in my stay there, but he was a god at the end of the hall, I must say, just a god.

Q: I've never talked to anybody who's been involved with the Visitors' Bureau. I've heard allusions - I've never served London - to a British lady-

LISSFELT: Joan Auten, since deceased, who was a wonderfully talented person, who I thought was working for me, but I learned after two years it was quite the contrary!

Q: *Could you say what you were doing?*

LISSFELT: (I was succeeded by a fellow whom you might want to interview or have interviewed named Tom Tracy, very successful Foreign Service officer and just recently running the management side of the Pan-American Health Organization, I think it's called.) The Visitors' Bureau job was two aspects: it was running a conference bureau and handling all the visitors who came through, but it also had the responsibility for what we called the "non-appropriated fund activities" in the embassy, which meant supervising the dining room and the cafeteria and a bar that we had down stairs and a wine mess, where we sold the duty-free liquors, used by all those authorized to buy there. The latter were all staffed by old, experienced and very shrewd Englishmen, who had learned long ago how to deal with their young supervisors, inexperienced American diplomats who didn't know anything about commercial business - and who may have been, but I don't think so, stealing us blind.

The Visitors' Bureau side of it, though, had a lot to do with Congressional visits. That was the era when Congressmen, senators and representatives, went abroad in droves.

Q: *John Rooney.*



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LISSFELT: Well, the late John Rooney, Congressman from Brooklyn, who oversaw, as you know, the budget process for State, arrived shortly after I was there, and it was a terrifying experience preparing for it. Nobody wanted to make one false move around this man for fear that the Department would get a complaint from him. The first responsibility of a junior officer friend of mine was to buy and have wrapped in plain brown wrappings case upon case of duty-free alcohol to be put in a stateroom aboard the SS United States for a certain Congressman.

These visits were a weekly, almost daily, event. They came in droves. Some of them were wonderful people, like Senators Fulbright and Javits, very serious people interested in foreign affairs. Many if not most - I remember the late Mendel Rivers coming with the Armed Services Committee groups - were just off to have a heck of a good time. And my job was sort of being the administrative support seeing that the control officer who ran the visit got all the help he or she would need. For John Rooney, we chose very carefully a control officer, Skipper Purnell, I remember very well, a wonderful guy, from the Political Section, who was anything but Ivy League - bushy eyebrows, gray hair, short, about my height and kind of anything but chic - smart man, but he wasn't Ivy League - no button-down shirts. And that was a man who served as contact man or "control officer" (a misnomer!) For John Rooney during his stay in London. But there were some interesting and serious CODELs. Things have it's changed now, I understand; Congress is afraid to travel for fear of criticism, and there are Foreign Service posts, as you may know, now pleading for more visits by the representatives of our Legislative Branch.

*Q: In The Washington Post today there's some criticism about a group going to Israel for the 50th Anniversary.*

LISSFELT: The three I's used to be the routine itinerary: Ireland, Italy, Israel. For any American politician, those were compulsory stops. They had a good side—I don't want to make this too critical - because they learned a lot, they established contacts, people looked at them and saw what the American Congress was made up of, and it made them

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much more understanding of what the Executive Branch had to deal with back there in terms of the other body, if you will.

Q: And it's often been pointed out: this is an opportunity. It's the only time when a Foreign Service officer can really, you know, sitting in a car or, you know, in long down times, can really-

LISSFELT: I remember meeting with Senator Jake Javits, one of the great towers, and Joe Clark, coming out of being mayor of Philadelphia. I remember spending a day with Clark in Tel Aviv in later years, going to visit Ben Gurion. Spending a whole day in a car with a distinguished senator was quite an experience. It was great.

*Q: In London, was somebody sort of watching you to say, "Now here iMendel Rivers and his crew, and you make sure they do this or that"?*

LISSFELT: We kind of managed it from afar, if you will. We would find a control officer who knew something about the area that they were supposed to be interested in. For instance, for Mendel Rivers or the Armed Service Committee, often the military attach# was chosen as the control officer, getting scheduled appointments, seeing them around, being sure that Joan Auten, our key local employee, was clearly in the picture, getting them theater tickets and things like that and making shopping arrangements. And we used to have also a frequent visitor from Ohio, former Congressman who was involved in all sorts of scandals in his office with his secretary.

*Q: Head of the Ways and Means Committee - was it Wayne Smith?*

LISSFELT: It was Wayne Hayes from Ohio.

*Q: He had a secretary who couldn't type but had a very large bososize, if I recall.*

LISSFELT: And he had a large desk in his office, and there were reported activities in that office on that desk that got the Congressman in trouble. It was beyond sexual

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harassment - let's just put it that way. He was driven out of the Congress and then ended up in the Ohio legislature, I think. But he was a great friend of Joan Auten, and anything he thought she should have, like a very good office in the embassy, she got overnight. You did not mess with him. You just developed political antennae and you knew - it was very disillusioning at first - that if you didn't want to bring trouble down on your own head or - worse - you handled these visitor cases with care. But some of it had to do with conferences, you know, setting them up, and my responsibility was for administrative arrangements entirely. But it was quite an eye-opening experience to go to your first Foreign Service post and have it be the new embassy in London, opened in 1960 or so, with a big eagle over the front door, which was a wonderful place physically, which has since, if you've visited it recently, been altered inside, e.g., the corridors are all divided by security doors. You have to punch buttons to go from one section to another. It's really kind of sad.

*Q: Did you have much opportunity to work with the British on this?*

LISSFELT: Not a lot, except the British who worked for us in the embassy. It was not my job to have much to do with the Foreign Office, and I seldom went there. As a matter of fact, I probably went there in my total time half a dozen times, but that would usually have been to escort somebody. But as soon as we got there they soon learned that I didn't know my way around the Foreign Office very much. So that was kind of a warped experience, if you will, but it was very eye-opening. Findley Burns was one of the masters of the whole personnel process at the Department of State and went on from there to be ambassador to Jordan and then also to Ecuador later. David Bruce obviously thought a lot of Burns and saw to it that he got his assignment from there as ambassador in Jordan.

*Q: Were there any times when any of the people who were visitors -you had visitors who weren't congressional types too, didn't you?*

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LISSFELT: Well you had half the Executive Branch who found a reason to travel to London for "important consultations with our closest ally," you had state organizations that came, and you had private citizens, of course, who came and wanted to tour the embassy, for example. We did a certain amount of showing private citizens around the embassy, which was essentially a rather open institution and known as one of the great buildings - built in the 1950s era of embassy construction. You could walk in there and you could practically go right downstairs and use the cafeteria if you wished. I don't think I could get in the embassy today as a retired Foreign Service officer. I don't think I could get through the door, security has become such a major preoccupation.

Q: Were there any problems that you can think of? Were there any cases where you had to get somebody out of trouble or anything like that?

LISSFELT: I don't recall anything. You know we had plenty of visits from Kennedy family members, too, by the way. Jacqueline Kennedy's sister, Radziwill, had a house in London and there were frequent visitors from the family. And we were obviously very solicitous of their needs. But things worked very well. There was a funny story - I think it was after my time in London - about one of the VIP airplanes landing at the wrong airport in London. There was an airport called Northolt, which was an RAF base quite near. Apparently the runways are almost parallel to the then existing runway at Heathrow, the commercial airport, and we had planes going down at the wrong place, things like that. But we had such excellent permanent British and other nation staff who knew how to cope with all these things, drivers and everything, who made our work easier. You know what it's like—the local staffs of any embassy can be the key to its success.

*Q: What was the reaction in the embassy in London on the assassination of President Kennedy?*

LISSFELT: Well, everybody was devastated, just devastated is the word. I remember we organized signing books in the lobby of the embassy. We started with one or two, and we

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ended up with 10 or 15 of these green volumes. People would come in, and we'd have people sitting for half an hour writing their thoughts. It was just heart-rending. People were distraught. And all the Americans in London, and the British, of course, had great admiration for Kennedy. One couldn't believe it. We were so ashamed, too, that this could happen to a President of the United States. By the way this was the time, too, of the huge British scandal involving Christine Keeler and their equivalent of the Secretary of Defense, Profumo. The Profumo Affair is what it was known as, and that was really a shocking thing. The British were in shock. This was before the assassination of Kennedy. But you asked me the highlights of my stay in London, and I could probably start with those two things, the assassination of Kennedy and the Profumo Affair, and the succession of prime ministers—you know, how they passed it on when Macmillan was succeeded by Sir Alec Douglas Home (spelled h-o-m-e but pronounced Hume), this taciturn Scotsman who looked absolutely skeletal, such a thin man. I'll never forget his face. His face looked like a skull, very tough, very smart. How they just passed it on, in the Conservative Party, sort of over drinks. Rab Butler, then the Conservative Party leader, and MacMillan virtually on their own decided on the successor, Home.

*Q: Rab Butler, yes.*

LISSFELT: Quite an eye-opener.

*Q: You went from London to a far different type of post. Could you tell how that came about?*

LISSFELT: Well, we went to Tel Aviv, and it was very much engineered through the wizardry of Findley Burns, who knew how to get the personnel process to be a little flexible so that I could go in “temporarily” as a commercial officer. We were interested in Tel Aviv, frankly, because particularly my wife was interested in going there. She was just fascinated by the Israeli experience and she prompted me, if I had needed any prompting, to see if we could get an assignment there, which we ended up happily getting and, after some training back here at FSI, went out there in January '65.

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*Q: And you were there to '67.*

LISSFELT: Yes, through the Six Day War. My family was evacuated ahead of me - we could see the war coming - seven days before it happened, when Nasser ejected UN troops from the Sinai, I stayed there with our Welsh Corgi dog.

*Q: I'd like to go back. When you arrived you went what? As a-*

LISSFELT: This was my second overseas assignment. I was still quite a junior officer. I arrived as the acting commercial officer. I didn't know anything about commercial work, but I soon learned, and I did that for a period of time after which I was to go into the Political Section, a three-man Political Section, where I was to be the junior person. Well, what I didn't know was this wonderful ambassador, the late Walworth Barbour, took the junior officer from the Political Section to be his staff aide! So I ended up moving into another staff position, which was not something that I necessarily sought, but didn't have much choice. What I was doing for a while was doing the commercial officer job in the afternoon and being Staff Aide in the morning for Barbour a good part of my first year in Tel Aviv.

*Q: What were our commercial interests in Israel at the time?*

LISSFELT: Well, this was before we were shipping lots and lots of airplanes. Phantom (F-4) aircraft became the big thing. My successor claimed credit for increasing the exports of the United States to Israel a thousand-fold, but it was the shipping of Phantom aircraft that made his statistics surge. It was before we had really supplanted the French as a source of military equipment for Israel, so it was all sorts of things: finding agents for American firms who wanted a local person to sell their goods; organizing a trade fair, which we did, featuring, among other things, automotive repair equipment, which - believe me - Israel needed in the worst way (that was quite a success; in fact my successor saw that through to the end); dealing with visiting American businessmen with one request after another; running a commercial library, which was a standard thing done in most

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commercial sections of embassies perhaps even today. Dealing with the U.S. Commerce Department from afar and with some of the minions that they sent abroad also was one of the, frankly, less desirable parts of it. Although I didn't know much about commerce, I didn't find that they knew much more than I did, unfortunately - the ones that I had to deal with. I've since gained a lot more respect for them, from my experience—for example, later in Paris.

Q: I would have thought that at that time there were a lot of Americans of Jewish origin who were involved in Israel one way or another, but also you're dealing with people, who along with the Lebanese and others, are known as being some of the most disputatious traders - sharp, very good traders - there, coming from the Levant. And having sort of the New York-Tel Aviv circuit and being a commercial officer, I would have thought you'd be in the middle of all sorts of things.

LISSELT: Well, the truth of it was, at least my experience of it was, that the really effective high-rollers, if I can call them that, didn't come near the embassy, had nothing to do with the commercial officer and didn't want to have anything to do with the U.S. government. And they didn't need any advice or counseling on how you find an agency in Tel Aviv. They had their contacts; they had their friends; and they didn't need us. I wasn't, therefore, terribly impressed by those - I don't want to call them "dregs;" that's not fair, but they were not very sharp people who wended their way into the embassy seeking help from me. And I helped them as much as I could, but I soon realized that even a few of them were so lazy they weren't doing their own research about any of the laws and things like that and we were able to help them do what they should have done on their own. It was a very mixed bag, but this was again another eye-opening experience about the U.S. government abroad, believe me, something I knew nothing about before and certainly was not qualified for.

Q: Let's talk prior to the Six Day War. How would you characterize the embassy - I mean, this was a country under siege, I mean, just by its nature, which it remains basically today,

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I guess, but changed quite a bit at that time - the people in the embassy and how you looked at it when you first arrived, how they looked at the world around them?

LISSFELT: You knew you were going into a hot spot, if you will, but it wasn't one where one felt physical danger. We lived north of Tel Aviv, where the U.S. PL-480 (Public Law 480) funds, which were generated by assistance given over the years, were used to build very nice housing, which was a heck of a good investment, by the way. My wife and I were a young couple with two young children, a third born when we were in Tel Aviv - and our reception couldn't have been more cordial. The dealings day in and day out had to do often with frictions - for instance, up in Jerusalem access to Mt. Scopus, the UN convoys running supplies up there when that was an enclave, no longer an enclave. Palestinian refugees were also a problem, but that was mainly dealt with out of here and out of Beirut - Washington and Beirut. But it was a very lugubrious clime to land in in '95, and we felt ourselves, indeed, very lucky. I consider it still one of my most interesting assignments, to be there at that stage in our lives.

*Q: Can you talk about - was it Ambassador Barbour?*

LISSFELT: Walworth Barbour had been there three or four years at least before I arrived, stayed a total of 11 years as ambassador there, and was a wonderful, taciturn, extremely smart bachelor, who was joined often by his sister, who came out to be his companion in the summer months. She came from Gloucester, from her home. He was a career person who had come from being the minister in London and had a distinguished career behind him. I think he was respected immensely, even, by Golda Meir, who was foreign minister then prime minister while we were there; by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol; by the Foreign Ministry, because he was known, I believe, as an objective career person with no particular axe to grind, who replaced, if memory serves me, a young American politician who was sent out there because of his connection with the American Jewish sympathizers in New York State.



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*Q: Was this Reed?*

LISSFELT: Yes, Ogden Reed. Herald Tribune newspaper connection, I believe. But Barbour was just a very nice but quiet, self-contained man who knew the meaning *pas trop de z#le* - "don't be too zealous" - in trying to manage our relations with foreign governments and how they deal with us - I think he was immensely respected and honored, for example, at the Weizmann Institute, where he did a lot to help them get money from this Public Law 480 pool of funds. He also knew how to talk turkey to the powers that be and to keep people like Assistant Secretary Joseph Sisco cognizant of some realities in Israel. Cool man, absolutely never saw him flap.

*Q: Did you ever get any feel for the attitude of our embassies in the surrounding Arab countries, because-*

LISSFELT: Oh, yes.

*Q: —there was very much the feeling from people in those places that Barbour - and this was true of almost any ambassador to Israel - was following the Israeli line too much?*

LISSFELT: Yes, all the time, and at least some of this was reflected in exchanges of telegrams. People were indiscreet. But for whatever reason, Walworth Barbour thought he was looking out for the American interests and realized the extreme American interest in things going on in Israel. Now he probably suffered from his share of "localitis," or addiction, if you will - or sympathy is a better word - for things in the host country. You can't escape it, particularly in a place as intense as the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem atmosphere. I think the Jerusalem consulate - which was not subordinate to the embassy, but was subordinate directly to the Department of State, and they were in the heart of things Israeli and Arab - thought that the embassy was hopelessly pro-Israeli, and they said as much, and it was a rather tense atmosphere between us and the consul general up there, whom we used to refer to as "Lord Mandlebaum," because the Mandlebaum Gate was the

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controlling point through which you had to go to get to the Arab side of the then divided Jerusalem. He lived on the Israeli side, but he was supposed to be looking out for the interests of both sides, but it was an impossible, still is, an impossible situation.

Q: We have a solid number of interviews with people who served in Jerusalem, and this feeling of opposition to the embassy in Tel Aviv is one of the classic cases.

LISSFELT: Well, it was painful because the consul general up there at the time wanted to be an ambassador, I strongly suspect - in fact, I know. After leaving he didn't become ambassador, but he had to figure out how to get an endorsement from Walworth Barbour, the ambassador in Tel Aviv. And I was witness to some of these rather painful conversations, and it was a rather eye-opening experience to see what matters. And I don't think he ever got an unvarnished endorsement. For whatever reason, he never got an embassy, poor man. He wrote a good book about Jerusalem since. I was just last night with a friend who served in Jerusalem on the Arab side, who was the second man in that consulate; the strength of feelings of that guy to this day against Israel are remarkable.

Q: *Who was that?*

LISSFELT: Donald Kruse. You may have interviewed Don. He's a good guy. He's resident right here and does work with Freedom of Information stuff. He'd be an interesting guy for you to talk to.

Q: I have. I've never served in Israel, but I'm told that one of the both delights and it wears you down is the intense debate of the political life that everybody gets into. I mean, it's a place where you'll sit around a dinner table and you'll find yourself having a very intense debate with Israelis, and this is a way of life there.

LISSFELT: Oh, it certainly is, and as I said earlier, it's an intense cavern that one lives in there. But, you know, we were young and extremely junior people in the embassy, and I had to be discreet as the ambassador's aide, because I was privy to certain stuff that I

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had better keep my mouth shut about. But I would never go out and tell anybody what I thought the ambassador thought about a given issue. I was discreet, to put it mildly. And we found our friendships there really centered on our neighbors and children because we had young children and they were going to the school there and living out in this Herzliya, a northern suburb of Tel Aviv, and our friendships really related to these wonderful people who were all around us there, just typical. Some of them were Americans, some Iranians. Their problems with their young kids were the same as ours, so it was all very friendly and seldom disputatious.

Q: I found there was a problem dealing with German-Americans who came back to Frankfurt - this was when you were there; this was '55 to '58 - who would know it all. They wanted everybody to listen to the words of wisdom because they'd been from the United States. I'd think this would have been even a worse problem with American Jews coming back to Israel.

LISSFELT: Well, I think you're right. There was certainly plenty of friction between them and the Israelis, who received the bulk of this whenever this occurred, but there was a very unfriendly attitude among these Americans toward the embassy, and particularly towards representatives of the Department of State, who were considered the enemy. I can remember going to visit the Weizmann Institute, which we used to do every year. They'd invite us down for a buffet dinner - the whole embassy staff was invited, and President Meyer Weisgal, who as a great friend of Barbour and the embassy and who knew the smart thing was for the Weizmann Institute, which was down in Rehoboth, in the south, to be close to the embassy. But I spent some of the most unpleasant evenings of my life down there on the receiving end, where these young Americans, who happened to be Jewish, were giving us you-know-what for what they considered an unsympathetic attitude toward the State of Israel. And I was just dumbfounded, because I knew, for example, the benefits that the Weizmann Institute was receiving in terms of U.S. public monies. It was

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enormous. I can remember some of these young women who were absolutely insulting to the embassy staff. It was very shocking, and very unpleasant.

The worst experience was at the time of the Six Day War, though, and the most embittering experience was the invasion - that's too strong a word - of these very same people who had come to live in Israel, and suddenly there was a crisis at hand, which might have endangered their lives and their future, and they poured into the embassy to get out of there, to get their documents in order so they could leave. And the people working in the Consular Section were the most bitter people I knew, the staff, processing these people through. There were lots of them; there were thousands of people who wanted to get the heck out of harm's way fast - not an endearing memory.

*Q: What was prompting this, do you think?*

LISSELT: Fear for their lives.

*Q: No, no, no, I'm talking about this feeling about the embassy.*

LISSELT: Well, I think it's traditional among Israeli supporters, and I know this from my later experience working on the Israeli Desk back in the Department, to have a hostile feeling toward these "Arabists" - with a quote around it - who populate the Department of State. Particularly the Middle East Bureau, particularly those who work on things Israeli are seen to be very unsympathetic - if not prejudiced against the cause of Israel - because of their Arab sympathies. But you know, it was such a joke because as you well know from your own career, to have served in an Arab country, for example, like serving in the United States, is to see the great side and to see the flaws, and you soon don't have blinders on about the weakness of any society.

*Q: I spent two and a half years in Saudi Arabia, and I sure didn't come out as an Arab-lover. I mean, au contraire [French: to the contrary]. Did you find that with the Israelis you*

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would meet, did you feel that you were being tested? I'm told people do this. I mean, "Is he anti-Semitic? Is he pro-Israeli?" This type of thing.

LISSFELT: Oh, yes. But the funny thing for me was my name, Lissfelt. It was not clear what my religion was. I could have been a Jewish-American. It happens I was born, and have been ever since, a rather bad Episcopalian. But I never wore a sign saying, "I'm not Jewish," or "I'm an Episcopalian." But it was even amusing to the point of dealing with people when they were trying to figure out where you belonged. Are you with us? Are you one of us? I mean, there were conversations that were hilarious in this regard. We used to live in Tel Aviv, and we used to go to church with our young kids down in Jaffa to a Catholic church - my wife's Catholic - and a not so amusing thing there was to come out afterward and find agents of Mossad, Israeli intelligence, writing down the license plates of all the cars that were attending Christian service in this harmless Catholic church. But we were aware of that, but that didn't... I think I stayed pretty objective in a situation where it's hard to be objective. I don't know if anybody can in the Middle East.

Q: I know. Did you run across problems with particularly the Americans of the extreme orthodox faith and, you know, all sorts of laws?

LISSFELT: No, on the contrary. The experience that we had with Americans that came over visiting and happened to be Jewish - this happened to the father of a roommate of mine, for example - was that they were very upset with Israel. They didn't like what they found at all. I admit this is anecdotal and not substantiated by statistics, but these people were upset by, you know, the taxi drivers. They'd come from New York and find Israeli taxi drivers rude! Well, I found that rather amusing. Certain rudeness in the shops. They're not a shop-keeping nation, as you will learn five seconds after you're in a shop, and people coming from America who've donated all their life to the United Jewish Appeal often expected deferential treatment. They had no right to it, but some of them thought they did. And that led to certain disillusionments and people leaving very unhappy with the experience. Anecdotal again, and I don't know what percentage that might have been.

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Q: How about with the officers particularly in the Political Section? I mean, was there a certain feeling of treading on eggs as far as reporting on Israel?

LISSFELT: Oh, sure. One was very cautious. One assumed that everything one put down on paper somehow was going to be read by the host nation or their representatives.

*Q: Or even worse, by a pro-Israeli senator in the United States.*

LISSFELT: That too, but one was always very careful. But again, when Barbour wanted to weigh in on something, he just said what he thought. But there was that feeling, and you know, again, I worked on the Israel Desk, and I became subjected to some of the pressures, if you will, of the sympathizers, which wasn't always a pleasant experience either.

*Q: How did you feel at the time about the Desk? I realize you weren't reporting, but it wasn't that huge an embassy-*

LISSFELT: A small embassy.

Q: -so you're a young officer, and you're around other young officers, and so you're picking up probably more of the gossip and the feeling. What was the feeling about how things were going with Israel back in Washington, at the Department of State? Was it a feeling of support, frustration?

LISSFELT: Oh, I think that everybody was cognizant - and there's a certain amount of exchange, people having worked in Washington in the Bureau - and they knew this first-hand - that the pro-Israel lobby is very strong. And every nation on earth has a right to organize and lobby our legislators and everyone else. It's just that the Israelis did it more effectively than probably any other single nation and still do to this day, be it information, be it money, be it energy, be it involvement. And one knew, if one knew that the sun rose in the east, that this was something very special. They had much more influence

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in Washington than any individual Arab nation or the Arab nations as a whole. One interesting thing while we were there, by the way, is that this was an embassy where the staff never contained an American Jewish member. Just like women weren't sent to Saudi Arabia to certain positions, American officers of Jewish origin, Jewish religion, were not sent to Israel. This changed while I was there, by the way, and the first American Jewish official, who happened to be an assistant Army attaché, came to Israel. I always had the impression that for him personally it was an extremely unpleasant experience because people tried to - exploit is too strong a word, but that's maybe what they wanted to do - exploit his dual loyalties. And I never had the feeling that this guy was intellectually strong enough to cope with the stresses and strains. He lived - a living hell is far too strong a word, but it was uncomfortable. Since then, as you know, this is routine. People of Jewish faith are sent there routinely.

*Q: Well, let's talk about the Six Day war. This was in the summer of-*

LISSFELT: June.

*Q: -June-*

LISSFELT: June 6th.

*Q: -of 1966.*

LISSFELT: 1967.

*Q: Can you tell about what was, sort of, the political and strategic atmosphere prior to that, and particularly from your perspective?*

LISSFELT: Well, there was sort of a calm before a storm. I remember making a trip with a visiting official from Washington down to the Egyptian-Israeli border on the Sinai and writing a telegram when I came back, and I still remember the title of it, which was "All's Quiet on the Sinai Front." This was a matter of weeks before the outbreak of this war, but

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what really sent a warning rocket in the sky a week before the war started was Nasser's decision to instruct U Thant, Secretary General of the United Nations, to get the UN observers out of the Sinai, out of the way between Israel and Egypt, a request to which he promptly acceded.

*Q: It was considered to be sort of a political bluff by many, and Thant was a little too quick on the trigger.*

LISSFELT: Well, there was that criticism, of course. Why did he accede so fast? Why didn't he try to delay? It was taken as a clear warning signal, and it was at that time that the embassy right away began to think about what might be coming. The Israelis were certainly thinking about it, and you know what happened. But we began right away to offer people who were going - for instance, we were going on home leave, and my family was given the chance to advance their departure, and I would stay behind, just rather than go in July. The invitation was: "Why don't you just go along a few weeks and take the kids and go? You're going anyway." That was the first trickle out, then voluntary departure of all dependents, you know we've been through this probably with the downsizing of an embassy and the question of essential personnel. We were really downsized before this thing started.

I'll never forget the first day. I was a control officer for the visiting mayor of Philadelphia, whose name I've long since forgotten, sitting in the Tel Aviv Hilton Hotel, probably the tallest building in the Middle East at the time, and certainly the biggest target, if there was going to be a war, on the Israeli side. On the Monday morning when this war started, the mayor and I were having breakfast, and suddenly everybody began to head for the underground bomb shelters in the Hilton basement.

*Q: It started with an Israeli air attack on the Egyptian Air Force.*

LISSFELT: Well the Israelis would say it started with Egyptian feints and the prospects of their attack. You could debate that, as to when it started, but as far as we were concerned,



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it started with the destruction of the Egyptian Air Force that Monday morning within a matter of three hours on the ground in the airfields across the face of Egypt. It was a just a brilliant preemptive strike. We knew this by the end of that first morning, by the way. By Monday at noon, we were sort of breathing a little easier. We had the feeling that one was in the middle of a war but there was no question that we, unlike our colleagues in Egypt and other places, were going to be on the winning side, i.e., in the victorious nation.

At breakfast, though, when the sirens began to sound and everybody was evacuating the Hilton and this mayor of Philadelphia insisted on finishing his breakfast. We were alone in this restaurant. I said, "I think we should get out of here. I think something's happening, you know. The staff are running and they came and warned us to go downstairs." Something happened to the mayor's mind. He became irrational. We went back to the embassy and went down in the underground garage and he wouldn't go. He was demanding his "civil rights." (sic!). He kept saying, "I demand my civil rights." We didn't know how that applied to the prospect of an imminent air attack, down in the basement with the embassy staff. In the event, we were never attacked. We then got that man out of town as quickly as we could. He was a senior public official who just went a little screwy. We heard horrendous stories from our friends in neighboring countries later. People in Egypt, I remember this, had to run a sort of gauntlet to get on trains to go up to Alexandria to be evacuated. It was horrendous for them. My family had gone ahead, fortunately, so I felt very free and confident and safe for myself, particularly after we saw what happened that first morning. On it went, and I left July 1st, when the war had long since ended and the Israelis were exultant and had hold of territories now which they have been ever since trying to figure what to do with.

Q: You mentioned that a lot of the Americans, who were some of the most ardent supporters of Israel, wanted to get the hell out as soon as the going got tough.

LISSFELT: It was distressing to watch that. I mean, it was something that left a very bad taste in one's mouth, and the people who worked in the Consular Section, who were on

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the receiving end of these insulting demands for prompt issuance of passports that had long since expired. They were on the receiving end. And this sudden exodus certainly didn't go unnoticed by the Israelis. I would have lunch with the staff afterwards, and they would come in shaking their heads. It was a very human reaction: the American Jews were frightened, they wanted to get out of there, and they thought they could; but the whole loyalty of many of these people to this state that we thought they had adopted - they thought they had adopted - suddenly evaporated in the face of this fear for their lives.

*Q: Were you also having to deal with an influx of American Jews who wanted to come in to be in Israel at the time?*

LISSFELT: Well, no we weren't, but I don't know anything about the statistics, but I am sure some came, but they would do it through the instrumentality of the Israeli officials, be it with the embassy in Washington or consulates elsewhere, to find out how to plug in. Probably some of them joined the armed forces and fought. Sure, there was that other element; that's important to balance with the story I've just told you about the people who wanted out. There were people who wanted in immediately and wanted to serve their friendly and maybe their adopted country. This was a time when you lost your citizenship, by the way, automatically for serving in the armed forces of a foreign country.

*Q: What was Barbour doing during this?*

LISSFELT: Well, Barbour was following his routine, which was to come to the embassy in the morning and stay late into the early afternoon and go home for lunch and not come back unless there was something pressing. I knew something was serious one day when he came back one afternoon. I asked myself, "What's Barbour doing back in this embassy?" I knew him very well, and this is not said with disrespect, because he was effective. But when he appeared at that embassy, something had to be up. But he was being taken to the Defense Ministry and getting briefings, seeing the Israeli military briefings. I never went along. He always went alone. They wanted to put him in the picture

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on this, that and the other thing, and were probably making requests for American help. We had our communications equipment flown in from the Sixth Fleet, so that we could communicate with them when they were over the horizon, out in the Mediterranean. We felt very reassured by that, in case of an evacuation.

*Q: This wasn't when the Liberty was attacked then.*

LISSFELT: Well, yes, the Liberty was attacked during the course of this Six Day War. I'm not sure which day. I've forgotten that, although I did have the dossier for the Liberty case when I went back on the Israel Desk. That was very confusing at the time we were there because it was still maintained that it was mistaken for an Egyptian tanker of some sort and there was confusion about to whom it belonged. I know that our naval attach# at the embassy was flown out in a helicopter over the ship after it had been hit. I remember him telling me the story that he dropped his card down in a little bag with his name, saying, "Can we help in any way?" And there he was, hovering over this hulk that had been shot to pieces. That was a terrible moment.

Q: I was wondering how this affected. The Liberty was an American naval communications vessel that was attacked and sunk with a very high loss of life by sustained attacks by the Israeli Air Force—

LISSFELT: —and, the ship maintained, in the face of a huge Americaflag flying on the stern.

Q: To this day there are many in the United States who will not forget the Liberty. I mean, this is not something that has gone away, and I'm curious about the embassy reaction at the time.

LISSFELT: Well, at the time we were preoccupied with other things, like destroying classified documents and getting ourselves ready to be evacuated if it came to that. Of course, by the time we were ready, it was already a foregone conclusion that we weren't

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going to have to go, by the way. But I don't remember a preoccupation out there with the Liberty event. The Liberty was an intelligence monitoring ship, which I think the Israelis, rightly or wrongly, assessed was trying to listen to the communications - which of course these ships do all the time out there, as do aircraft - and the analysis at the time was that the Israelis wanted to limit the U.S. government's ability to gather independently intelligence by shooting up that ship. Now they maintained that a horrible mistake was made and since paid millions of dollars. I think a lot of people were killed and many people wounded from that. It was a terrible event. War is a terrible thing, and if this was done with intent, which everybody seems to think, it just shows you the determination - or maybe desperation - of a state under siege.

Q: What about the acquisition of the West Bank and all of Jerusalem and all of that. How was that playing? I mean when you left there, not too long after the war-

LISSFELT: There was exhilaration on the part of the Israelis, particularly on the taking of the Golan Heights, which was done the last day, on Friday. I'll never forget that Friday sitting in my backyard in Herzliya north of Tel Aviv and seeing the Israeli Air Force flying back from their attacks on it. They were bound and determined not to let the Syrians escape scot-free from that war. It was clear. But particularly the taking of the Golan Heights - from which kibbutzim below were shelled periodically. You had to look up at the Heights to appreciate the military advantage. There was exhilaration on all Israeli hands. My neighbor was a young man of American origin but living in Israel, an insurance executive, who was fighting - he was just my age - fighting the third time in a war for his country as a bombardier on a plane. And these people were walking six feet off the ground. I recall our having the temerity to suggest: "Now is the time to be magnanimous. Be magnanimous in victory when you have whipped these nations. It's an opportunity which will come maybe once in a lifetime." But that certainly fell on deaf ears, and I don't recall how persistently the U.S. government pursued that. The idea was, now is the time to settle Jerusalem; now is the time to settle the West Bank, give it back, establish relationships. You're the victor. Be as magnanimous as you possibly can in victory, and

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it might settle the Middle East problem forever. But you suggested that and hardly got to the end of your sentence before sensing that the person listening to you, an Israeli, was so relieved by what they had accomplished in six days - I mean, with reason. He was intoxicated.

Q: Were you aware of anyone in the embassy saying, "Yes, this is great, but what are the Israelis going to do with the West Bank and all these Arabs?"

LISSFELT: Oh, sure. Everybody knew the population increase potential for the Arab populations they were swallowing. Could they swallow this meal, or would it choke them? Idle chitchat, but again, I left the 1st of July and never went back, so I don't know anything about the efforts to pursue this idea of magnanimity in victory as an opportunity to settle something with people who will be your neighbors for the rest of eternity.

Q: *Did Menachem Begin cross your horizon?*

LISSFELT: Not then at all. I think he was a member of Parliament, but he hadn't risen to become prime minister, and this was very much the days of the Labor r#gime, and it had been for years, and you had giants like Golda Meir and Moshe Dayan, Levi Eshkol, not to mention Ben Gurion, who was still alive and still a force out there. I remember visiting Ben Gurion. I told you of this visit to his apartment up in Carmel in Haifa with Senator Joseph Clark, a very simple, humble apartment. There was Ben Gurion in his elegant black suit, talking to Clark; and his wife—I think her name was Paula, wonderful woman—had a box of chocolates, and all the time they were talking - we were four people together—and she kept looking at me, and she tried to size me up and finally she hit me with an elbow and said, "You want a chocolate?" Then she decided to share these chocolates. It was really a moment. I had a chocolate with Ben Gurion. It was great, one of those moments in the career that you just cherish. Giant of a man.

Q: *What was your impression of Golda Meir?*

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LISSFELT: Well, a tower of strength, just a person of reason. And I would see her later back in the Department when I worked there, and I mean, this woman was just incredible. She was so tough and so persistent and so smart, and she was head and shoulders above her cabinet colleagues. There were other people like Egal Alon, who was quite an impressive gentleman, as was Moshe Dayan; and Yitzhak Rabin, at the time, was the chief of staff of the Army, and he was already head-and-shoulders above the crowd, to put it mildly. But Golda Meir was something unique, I'm sure, in the history of Israel. They don't make them like that very often.

*Q: What was your impression, when you arrived in Israel, of Nasser?*

LISSFELT: Well, Nasser was the arch-enemy. He was the threat, the biggest Arab country and that's what they worried about most. Lebanon was quiet, you know; nobody worried about the Lebanese frontier. The Lebanese, everybody always said, will be the second to make peace with Israel. There will be somebody, they'll wait for somebody else to take the move, and then the Lebanese will move. Syria was a real worry, but not a military worry, because the Israelis thought they could handle them. A pinprick all the time - more than a pinprick: there was shooting from the Golan Heights, as I mentioned above. Israel was upset when the king came into the Six Day War. As you may remember, he entered the war in spite of Israel doing everything they could to keep him out, they say. Nasser was the threat, the problem, this giant state, the big army, and Russian support all over the place and Russian equipment. They were very worried about him.

*Q: Well, why don't we stop at this point, because it's good to stop at a time. We've got you leaving Israel in July of 1967, and it will be picked up the next time.*

LISSFELT: Okay, if you can stand more.

Q: Part II of the oral history interview of Mark Lissfelt. It's being conducted in Boston on October 30 by Richard Jackson. Mark, you took the story up last time with Stu

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Kennedy through your tour in Israel and you were preparing to depart Israel for your next assignment. That was a two-year assignment in Mali, wasn't it?

LISSFELT: Well, Dick, actually I had home-leave-and-return orders from Israel to come back to Israel for two more years to a good job in the embassy, to a house full of belongings, a car in the garage, and a certain amount of Hebrew study under my belt. However, when I arrived the fateful summer of '67, back in Washington, I was told by Personnel only then that my assignment had been broken and that I was being sent to Bamako, Mali. I won't share, because you can easily imagine, the shock that that created for me and for my whole family and even made my wife ask, "Do you really want to work for an organization that would do such a thing to you?"

Q: This was because of the "daisy chain" of other people, and you were the end of the chain and somebody else had to be accommodated, or why would they do a thing like that?

LISSFELT: Well, it was done by a friend and classmate, I'm told, Hume Horan, who went on to be a distinguished ambassador. At the time he was making assignments in Africa for a fill-in assignment and, at the same time was well aware that the Arabists in the Middle East had been sent flying from embassies that closed one after the other because of the Six Day War. And the Department had the problem of placing a number of Arabists, and I think it was a bad confluence of needs, and my body was served up. I was replaced in Israel by a very nice guy who was an Arabist who profited taking my place in Israel, had a job, and I was sent off to a place that had been vacant for 18 months, a job as the economic-commercial officer in a country then in the early stone age, with \$600 of recorded trade with the United States, in songbirds and carved wood objects. The futility of it all was just overwhelming, but we bit the bullet, and off we went with three young children and a Welsh corgi pup in a carton for the next two years in Bamako.

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It turned out to be less than that because early in 1969 the Department in its wisdom and the Near East Bureau specifically urgently needed somebody to come back to serve on the Israeli Desk, where a friend and colleague, John Leonard, had resigned, and I became their leading candidate in their desperation. You can imagine my first reaction when I heard that the Middle East Bureau wanted me back suddenly after the way I'd been, I thought, rather cavalierly and ineptly dealt with by the same bureau. Nevertheless, it took about 18 seconds in dusty downtown Bamako, Mali, to decide that it was time to go, and back we went to the Israeli Desk. But in the intervening months we'd had, really, I must admit, a rather interesting time in a terribly poor, dusty, forlorn, godforsaken place in the hands of a communist-dominated regime, then very unfriendly to the United States, although the Malians as people are an extraordinarily friendly group, as has been demonstrated in the ensuing years. While we were there, there was a coup d'état, which replaced the father of the country, Modibo Keita, an interesting experience, totally bloodless, totally peaceful. The tanks in the streets were used more often to hang the laundry of the soldiers than anything else. There were about eight old Russian T-34 tanks by the way, which barely ran. Totally bloodless, except for the Father of the Country, who was incarcerated in one prison after another and eventually died. But we enjoyed it, in a sense, because of the extraordinary contrast with the life we had led up until then. While in this francophone country, we worked on our French, but we found it isolating, and after a while, I must admit, boring. Life centered around the small diplomatic community and the biggest entertainment were pool parties around people's swimming pools, the same faces week-in, week-out, never any contact with any Malians, who again had nothing to gain and only could lose by contact with an American official.

Q: That was because it was a military regime? I remember Modibo Keita was quite an imposing military figure, big man. How did he happen to be overthrown? Was it basically tribal?



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LISSFELT: No, I think it was, in fact, military, and he was replaced by some young Turks out of the Malian Air Force, many of whom we had trained to fly C-47 planes at various U.S. bases, and in ensuing years a series of military people have run that country, having had rather positive experiences at the hands of the U.S. military. Modibo's background was as a teacher. He came out of the famous Lyc#e in Senegal, whose name escapes me, that has trained so many of Africa's leaders. And he rose, at the time of the French dominance, through that channel. But it wasn't a military coup in the sense that - well, I guess it was a military coup in the fact that the leaders were military people, but again, I wasn't around long enough. This happened in November '68, and I left February '69, so I wasn't around to experience the "after;" I only knew the before.

Q: And you mentioned you were on the commercial side, which was fairly limited. Given the economy being active and ambitious, you must have gotten into most of the other aspects of the small embassy. Who were the people you were with, and what seemed like the best thing to get your teeth into?

LISSFELT: Well, fortunately, we had leadership that didn't think that they were serving at the center of the world and had their egos largely under control. The first ambassador was C. Robert Moore, a wonderful man-

Q: *Wonderful guy.*

LISSFELT: —succeeded by Ed Clark, who had been in the African Bureau for many years, also another wonderful guy, both of them with nice wives and very sympathetic to leading a post in extraordinary hardship conditions. It was not that we wanted to eat and to drink, but isolation - you couldn't leave, for example, the capital; you couldn't go more than five miles outside the capital without a foreign office note requesting and acceded to. You requested and they acceded, if they felt like it, to your demand. So we had in Bamako five Sunday drives after going to church, down in that dusty big cathedral, what was left of it, but they were all quite short.

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No, as to what I sunk my teeth into, there wasn't anything to sink your teeth into because there was a bunch of state-run enterprises, and they wouldn't see me. They would have, again, nothing to do with the American embassy. The highlight of my career as an economic-commercial officer, I remember, was stumbling across a report that some French people had written up about prospects and plans for the economy of Mali for the next couple of years and where it should go. I found it on a dusty shelf in a government printing office. I was the only white face in the place, an object of a certain unfriendly curiosity. I built that into probably the best report - it didn't take any work on my part - on what the Department had on where Mali thought it might go. There were even a few statistics, rare in anything about Mali. Of course, the coup d'état came along and made that moot. But survival and morale - survival in the sense of maintaining one's family's morale and health - were, looking back, I think, preoccupying. But again, we had, as memory dims, fond memories of Mali and lots of good stories to tell about life there and trips, for example, to the Dogon country, to look at the source of some of the most important African wood carvings in the world and to take a trip, Cindy and I, on a wonderful old steamer, the "General Soumare," down the Niger River to visit the city of Timbuktu, which was an experience that I won't soon forget - dusty streets, Tuareg warriors leading their camels about as the tail end of a caravan moved through with salt and other trade across the Sahara Desert.

Q: It was then very much a French preserve. Were there still French corporations all over the place. Mali had a reputation for radicalism and ties in that period with the Chinese, no?

LISSFELT: Yes, but it still was very much a French preserve, the French thought, more so than the Malians, that's for sure, but there were lots of Russians, and a huge Chinese embassy and little aid projects such as a match factory. The Chinese were always helping natives build match factories across Africa, so they had their match factory. But the French - they had a wonderful French ambassador at the time. His name was Pierre Pélissier, married to an Irish woman who didn't stay very long once she saw Mali. But the main

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feature of the French ambassador was his dislike for the French community and his close attachment to the American community, which led to all sorts of interesting conversations, and good times - I must say - and good eating at his residence.

*Q: So you left Mali and Africa never to return for a posting in '60 to go back to Israeli affairs on the Desk.*

LISSFELT: That's right. I went back to IAI, as it is called, Israel-Arab Affairs, to work for a very fine guy, Roy Atherton, and then for Heywood Stackhouse, who succeeded him, another fine man whom I'd known and worked for in Israel. This would have been in early '69, leaving Mali, of course being seen off at the airport by the whole embassy staff, with champagne toasts and tears of those left behind. I know it wasn't because we were leaving, but it was because they were staying. I spent the better part of two years in NEA-IAI, until April of '71. I was doing my share of speechifying, going around the country with "truth squads," we called them, before the Zionist organizations of America and other campus groups, where generally anybody from the State Department was raw meat thrown before the dogs, and we were eaten alive more often than not.

One time before the Zionist organization in Pittsburgh, a few blocks from my home, where my mother accompanied me and witnessed with horror on her face as her son on the stage was eaten alive by others on the stage and in the pro-Israel audience. It was horrendous. The main preoccupation then was what we called the Jarring mission. That was the name of a Scandinavian diplomat who was trying to get things going by way of peace talks. Joe Sisco was the extraordinarily active and able, although gritty and scratchy, not particularly friendly Assistant secretary who led us and who was considered by Henry Kissinger over in the White House at the time to be the only assistant secretary in the Department of State who knew how to do the job right.

*Q: You were really there between Arab-Israeli wars, weren't you?*

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LISSFELT: That's right. Between the '67 and the '73 Wars. I had had my Israeli war. Anybody who's had any experience with Israel talks about "their" war; mine was the '67 War. And I must say, I left that assignment, when by the way we started for the first time plotting on a big map of Israel after the Six Day War, Israel and the West Bank (the famous long map with the green line on it that everybody had in their offices at the time) the various new settlements that were being established. As Moshe Dayan, the minister of defense of Israel, the leader of the extraordinary Six Day War effort, used to say, "We are creating facts." And they were creating facts that we are living with still today, but I can remember with colleague, Mike Sterner, starting to put these pins in a map, and it was only a sprinkling of them across the West Bank of the Jordan, which have, of course, grown to their present dimensions. We were wondering why we never as a government did much to stop it, but we didn't. Anyway, those were the main preoccupations of the time. There are lots of records of conversations in Joe Sisco's office which had to be done up by us note-takers and sent out in NODIS (No Distribution) cables after visits by various ambassadors calling on him. Then Sisco often ushered in a lady journalist of The Washington Post, whose name has long since escaped me, and then briefed her thoroughly, and so the whole story of his advancement of the American cause in the Middle East was in The Washington Post the following morning. Often, many lines that were in our highly classified cables, which we were compelled to do up the day of the conversation and get to his office to be sent out in a rush that very day appeared in her stories.

Q: Being present there as these settlements were moving forward, facts on the ground - you've watched it since - it's now October '98 - what do you think about a settlement, what about this new Wye Agreement, with the background you have on Israel? Are you optimistic?

LISSFELT: Well, you now, you have to curb your optimism in any conversation about the Middle East and any relations between the Arabs and the Israelis, Palestinians and the current Netanyahu Israeli government. I think it's the only straw we have to hold onto. It

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may be a weak read to mix my metaphors, but I think recent events in the newspaper, in the aftermath of the killing of the Israeli soldier, the effort to bomb a bus just yesterday, the things that Arafat has done, give reasons to show that he means business this time, and I think probably Netanyahu, the prime minister of Israel himself, may be even impressed.

Q: Well, Mark, you talked about speechifying and outreach to various Zionist groups. One has the impression that your assignment, and that office generally, has a lot of preoccupation with domestic politics and outreach. Were the groups then as vociferous and articulated as they now are and did you find through ties to them difference of approach and view between the career and the political levels of the department?

LISSFELT: Well, I don't remember on the very last point much difference. At our level, my exposure to people up the line really ended with Joe Sisco. At this time, William Rogers was the Secretary and I use to see him regularly bringing in a group of American Jewish leaders. I think it's the American Presidents' Conference or Conference of Presidents of various major American Jewish organizations.

Henry Kissinger was over in the White House till Rogers left. And Rogers struck me as very reasonable and a very moderate man, extremely - I'll go back to the word reasonable in his conversations with these American Jewish leaders. They were a very distinguished group of people, as you can well imagine, very cordial, very high-level, and always prefixed their conversations with the Secretary by protestations of affiliation and loyalty as American citizens to their own government with a keen appreciation for what might be done to help the situation in Israel.

Q: Was there a feeling that much of the action was with Henry Kissinger in the White House, the NSC, and that Rogers was frequently struggling to catch up?

LISSFELT: ...With the boss of the building in which you worked, namely Mr. William Rogers, but the contacts were constant between him and Kissinger or Kissinger's office, and we didn't kid ourselves that the shots in this area, particularly because of the domestic

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political considerations, were very much directed from the White House, by whomever, and the domestic politics we mentioned a minute ago were constantly on our mind. We forgot them at our own peril.

Q: This, being your first Washington tour, was a kind of period of getting to know the Department and making linkages and getting the feel of that bureaucratic culture, which may have been a little shocking after Mali.

LISSFELT: [Note: This was actually my second Washington assignment.] Well, it's an enormous place, but we had the satisfaction of working in an organization, namely the Middle East Bureau, which was extraordinarily well staffed with a very talented bunch of people. We always believed at the time that we were, if not the best, at least tied to the best bureau—the laurels always went to the European Bureau—that we were tied with them, if not ahead of them, in those days in punch and leadership. Sisco was a dynamic guy with access to the White House. But individuals throughout the Bureau were extraordinarily qualified people. It was very gratifying, day in and day out, to enjoy the colleagues and also those with whom we worked in the International Organization Bureau, particularly the political office there, were just first-class, friends and high quality people. That was the major recollection I have and always will have of that period; nevertheless, I did have my fill - that's the reason I left the Bureau - of the political aspects of it and really decided to take the opportunity to follow a colleague into the Bureau of Intelligence and Research.

Q: Before you leave that, that was a time there was a real work ethic in NEA. A desk officer like yourself was working, I suppose, 10 hours a day and certainly in there on Saturdays, see and be seen. Was that part of it?

LISSFELT: That was part of it, but, you know, it was not horrendous. We had crises, and we had duties in the Operations Center, and certain task forces, I'm sure, were set up in that period. We were well staffed, and we were well led, and the man who worked

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the hardest around us was our office director, Roy Atherton, who, it just seemed every time when I was leaving at, say, 6:30 of an evening, was just beginning another task, like writing a speech for the assistant secretary to give the following day. I just marveled at his ability and his calmness to produce under fire. It was just extraordinary. But no, I don't recall, just living down in the office, but of course, it was a huge shock coming in from this little post, Bamako.

*Q: So what appealed to you in moving over to INR?*

LISSELT: Well, of course, every career person would say, "This fool made the career-contrary move to INR away from a geographic bureau. He was finishing his career. Didn't he know it?" Well, I didn't think that at the time, and I don't think it hurt me. I went off to a very interesting corner of INR, called Strategic and General Intelligence, working day-in and day-out with the strategic raw materials that came out of the sky, namely satellite photography and electronic intercepts.

*Q: You had sensitive compartmented information, intelligence?*

LISSELT: Yes.

*Q: CI, they called it.*

LISSELT: I've forgotten what it was called. We were strategic and general intelligence - that's what the office was called - led by a very able guy, Frank Perez, who had come over from years in the Air Force and was very sophisticated, in fact, in helping the Department staff itself for the first arms control talks with the Soviets, SALT I and so forth. He was the key staff person in our office, was helpful to people like Elliott Richardson, who was the Deputy Secretary and very active, and Ron Spires, who ran the Political-Military Bureau at the time. I did move to INR because of two friends who had the job I was to have and enjoyed it. I replaced Dick Bogosian, who was wild about the job, and he led me to believe that it would be fascinating - as it was. My own anticipation was exaggerated; the reality

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was that a new division leader came on between me and the office director and, in fact, gobbled up most of the interesting work and I was relegated to membership on a number of interagency intelligence committees on missilery and that kind of stuff. Then, continuing the briefing daily of the Pol-Mil (Political-Military) Bureau staff meeting every morning at nine o'clock. That was one of the highlights of my day.

*Q: This wasn't a line of work you could particularly take home anshare with your wife or have much discussion of.*

LISSFELT: No, at that time this stuff was very highly classified and, as you said, compartmentalized intelligence requiring special clearances and all that. You had to travel around with briefcases locked, and I had to go out weekly to NPIC, the National Photo Interpretations Center, down in Southeast Washington, which was a horrendous and sometimes terrifying trip in a rickety taxicab, clutching these locked briefcases in my arms to get briefed on the latest intelligence from space. The information was all coming back, as you may recall, from space, being dropped by parachutes from the photographic satellites and caught in the air by C-130 aircraft and then brought back to the United States. I gather now it's quite electronic, all the way to desktop view screens where you can see the stuff almost simultaneously, "real time." But then I was handling a lot of sensitive paper, and had to be careful. Very few FSOs, probably not a dozen in the whole State building, knew a fraction of what I knew about all this stuff and were seeing the kind of things that were going on at the Soviet missile and nuclear test centers, which was very fascinating, as we watched their development of new test centers and missile ranges and so forth, not to mention other countries around the world, which were working on strategic capabilities, too.

*Q: It sounds quite technical; you were having to recognize an SS-1from and SS-17 still in a crate on a freighter?*



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LISSFELT: No, that's what the photo interpreters at NPIC did. They were quite technical. No, we didn't have to do that; we just had to take the raw materials (blown up photos) and analyze them and think about the implications for American foreign policy, for arms control negotiations, mainly to keep an eye on what the Soviets really were doing, whatever they might have said in Geneva or elsewhere. I won't exaggerate my role; I was a small cog in a wheel that was led ably by Frank Perez, who really knew this stuff and had many years working on it in the U.S. Air Force. But for an FSO it was mind-boggling, and also it was interesting to be thrown into the midst of this intelligence community in Washington, a group that really never saw more than one FSO at a time and distrusted each one from beginning to end, as blabbermouths and people who couldn't be trusted with anything. But when you got to know the working level contacts that didn't apply at all. They were good colleagues. But one saw how the intelligence community operated and saw, by the way, the prejudices that particularly the military services brought to the table in any discussion, obviously under instructions to find any way possible to enhance the U.S. military's defense budget to match real or suspected Soviet, and also Chinese threats, particularly in this case in the nuclear missiles field. It was pretty sexy stuff and, by and large, interesting. But for an FSO it was really a side track, and I thought to myself, there were days, I'm sure, What have I done? I'm really off the track here. I'm trying to make myself useful to FSO's, thinking about the future of one's career and the next move, but basically the people I worked with were intelligence community staff from all the various agencies in Washington and the military, NSA and so forth. And the CIA, by the way - I retained enormous respect for the people from the CIA who more often than not allied with us, with the State Department, as these interagency arguments that went on. They seemed to be the most objective and intelligent of the bunch. The military services representatives were the other extreme.

Q: The CIA and the intelligence community generally, of course, were winding much higher and were a much bigger force in Washington than they are today. Did you feel that the misperceptions of FSO's, the negative stereotypes, were just the result of the

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compartmentalization and the secrecy and isolation of different community segments, or was there some fault in the FSO culture or lack of outreach or a kind of arrogance at State?

LISSFELT: Oh, I would never be one to say that arrogance wasn't rampant in the halls of the Department of State or in interdepartmental, interagency, consultations. But seriously, I wouldn't ascribe it to that; I would ascribe it - particularly the military services - they all had their own intelligence sources - and the navy, of course, was the most closed-mouthed of any. They didn't trust the rest of the military services. They didn't trust the Secretary of Defense. I'm exaggerating here, probably, but only slightly. And certainly they weren't going to trust some political officer out of the Department of State. After all, we spent a lot of our careers talking with foreigners, so we couldn't be trusted to keep a secret, they thought. Now, again, having said that, in the councils around the table one acquired a certain standing by being reasonable and by being helpful and by being positive in what one did, so pretty soon they became at my level, the working level, if you will, rather helpful and reasonable colleagues. Again, this antipathy didn't extend to the CIA, by the way. The CIA personnel one sensed always looked at us as allies around the intelligence committees tables.

Q: You know, INR has sometimes been a springboard. I know somebody like Leon Furth, the Vice President's national security advisor, used it as a platform over the years, and you, too, emerged from it to a plum assignment at NATO; and thinking that you had previously been in NEA and AF and then INR but never EUR, how did you land that?

LISSFELT: My first assignment was overseas London, so I had this wonderful geographic spread that the Department said they wanted in their personnel, not to mention this wonderful substantive spread from being an economic-commercial officer to being an intelligence specialist to being a political officer - you know, the usual thing. But I was told by people in Personnel then that I was so far just right, that I was just what they said they wanted, you know, a mile wide and an inch deep.

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Well, I was considering in - it would have been - '71 the next stop, and I had decided that I wasn't going back to the Near East Bureau or to that region overseas because of reasons that I have already alluded to, specifically the fatigue of dealing with the Arab-Israel problem, especially after seeing one day a vignette I'll never forget: Roy Atherton, for whom I continue to have great respect, being humiliated by an Israeli, the DCM, name of Shlomo Argov (who went on to be the Israeli ambassador in London and was shot, not dead but senseless, by an Arab terrorist on the streets of London). He humiliated Roy and complained that the U.S. was not doing enough to get back Israeli pilots that were still in the hands of Egyptians from the Six Day War. He wiped the floor with Roy in Roy's office, and I witnessed it, and I couldn't stand it.

*Q: In a public setting?*

LISSELT: No, in his office, in an office call. And I went to Roy later at the end of the day, after writing this up in a reporting telegram, and said, "I just can't stand it, Roy. I've never seen anything like that. How could you take it?" And Roy sort of shrugged in his wise, rather tired, way, and that was the end of that day. I thought to myself, I need to get out of here. Hence the desire to get back to the European Bureau, which happened quite by chance, through the efforts, I think, largely, of a guy named Bill Bodde, a friend over the years, who was making European assignments in Personnel and had the chore of putting together a list of candidates to go to NATO headquarters to be the directeur adjoint du cabinet - that's the deputy-director of the private office of the secretary General then, Joseph Luns.

Well, when I heard about this, I learned that he'd put me on the list to replace Jack Maresca, who'd been very successful there. I was not keen. I'd had my share of staff and staff assistant type work. I thought, my Lord, I'm getting into a rut, and they're helping me stay there. But it was too late; they had put me forward. The Secretary General came to Washington in the spring with the director of his private office, Paul Van Campen, a very special individual, who interviewed me along with people like John Kelly and a few

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other FSOs. I'll never forget the interview, and I think what interested Van Campen most in me was my Israeli experience, because he was a Jew and a Zionist with a horrendous experience himself at the hands of the Nazis in Amsterdam, when he was saved, almost by a miracle, from being caught and killed, as was most of his family. That relates to a story I'll tell you later about the Israeli connection. Anyway, when my interview was all done I went back to the office, and the phone rang a few minutes later. It was Van Campen calling. He'd forgotten to ask me if I knew any French, important because the two official languages in NATO are English and French. We had a short conversation in French, and I told him that I'd studied French at the Sorbonne. I had a pretty good accent from my year there, frankly, and that seemed to clinch my assignment.

Q: Didn't you work at the elite Ecole Sup#rieure Pour le Perfectionnement et la Pr#paration des Professeurs de Fran#ais # l'Etranger?

LISSFELT: Oui [French: Yes], but nobody I was ever associated with called it "elite." It happened to be staffed, at the time I was there, with U.S. students on the GI Bill who could get paid for it and really wanted to do sculpting or whatever else they did, and I suppose in my whole group there were probably two or three of us actually seriously trying to learn French.

*Q: But you got enough to get this job.*

LISSFELT: That helped me get the job. That was the clincher. And Van Campen went back and consulted with the Secretary General, and I got a call a few weeks later that I'd gotten the job on condition I could be at NATO in June so that they could train me up in time so they could all go off for their August vacations, which are, of course, sacred in Europe, as you know. We were pleased, reconciled to the job, and pleased to go to Brussels, and off we went with four children and this time another dog, a big Irish setter. For the next three years, 1973 to 1976, we worked in a fascinating job for a wonderful and

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extremely amusing man, Joseph Luns, but under the direct supervision of the not terribly wonderful and not very humorous director of his private office, who had his problems.

*Q: What's this, Van Campen?*

LISSELT: Yes, just to give you the setting, we worked in adjacent rooms. I probably saw him 200 times a day through a connecting door, speaking on everything imaginable. I think it took a year before he really began to trust me, and the sign was when he finally came in to me - I was very careful about not calling him Paul, but rather Dr. Van Campen. Then one day he said, "Mark, you may call me Paul, and your wife may call my wife Daphne," whom we almost never saw. I knew then I was accepted, that Paul then considered that, although he wasn't a hundred per cent sure, he thought that maybe he had one ally in the whole of NATO headquarters against the masses out there. He had a particular animosity against anybody in uniform, which was a rather bizarre fixation for somebody at a defense alliance headquarters. Anyway, it was three fascinating years, including traveling periodically with the Secretary General. When Van Campen didn't go, I could.

*Q: Luns had a certain amount of humor and zest for life, didn't he?*

LISSELT: Oh, wonderful, wonderful man, just one of the most amusing and interesting people I've ever met in my life, and a great success as a politician. He'd been 19 years as, he used to say, foreign minister of a "not insignificant little country," The Netherlands, with this wonderful accent that he had. The closest time I ever came to having a fight or an argument with Joseph Luns came over the removal of Richard Nixon from the White House, by the way, in the summer of '74, the year after I arrived, I happened to believe that the right thing was being done and that the American Constitution was functioning; and I was, although shaken, relieved about this, having seen the hearings in the summer of '73 with Senator Sam Ervin. It was on television before leaving for my assignment in NATO, and I told Luns that I really believed it was the right thing. He was outraged, as Nixon, he said, was the only American president who consistently kept his word "to me" as

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foreign minister, who knew something about foreign policy and was interested in the world. "And you destroy him. You're mad." And he continued this argument with me periodically. He would appear looming over my desk from time to time with no warning. He never wore shoes in the office so you could not hear him coming. He'd come in in stocking feet, and suddenly I'd be aware of this six-foot five presence looming over me, as I said, at my desk with another argument he'd thought of, why I was a fool and the American system hadn't worked. I would limply try to reply that, yes, in fact, the system had worked and that whatever Mr. Nixon's qualities, in my personal view and many Americans', we were well off without him. But those were intense moments, amusing in retrospect.

*Q: Bill Liddendorf was the Nixon-selected ambassador at that time iThe Netherlands, if memory serves.*

LISSELT: And Luns knew him well there.

*Q: He recounts in his own oral history his close friendship anadmiration for Luns.*

LISSELT: Whether they were close friends, I don't know. I think Luns admired his art collection. I saw no evidence that he admired his intellectual involvement or curiosity about foreign policy. I'll just leave it there. Let me think if there's anything else particularly about Luns, except it was fascinating times, fights over cod wars and things like that. And then the Cyprus crisis of '74, when the Turks invaded Cyprus - two NATO allies practically at war - was a certain moment of truth.

In the American side, by the way, David Bruce was the permanent representative when I arrived, who had been my ambassador in London on my first assignment. Bruce was back from China, and this was 13 years later, very senior and aging, I must say, but a distinguished and revered man, after whom the staff at NATO named their conference room. It's still called the Bruce Room.

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He was succeeded by Donald Rumsfeld, quite a different generation and quite a different personality, after whom, I assure you, there are no rooms named at the U.S. delegation at NATO - and many tales of unhappiness and unnecessary abrasions under his leadership. I didn't experience them because I was not part of the U.S. mission. My one major encounter with Ambassador Rumsfeld, by the way, was when I met him. Jack Maresca took me over to say farewell on his part and to introduce his successor, and he sat in his office in this headquarters that NATO was in then, and still is in, outside Brussels, at Ev#re. I sat beside an air conditioner that was roaring. I could not hear one word that Ambassador Rumsfeld said to me, and I kept saying, "I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I can't hear." And I'm sure it was as a result of that, which was very brief encounter, that he must have thought, "What a damn fool is around the corner working for Secretary Luns. I won't pay any attention to this one." It was very amusing, a little embarrassing, but still, I'll never forget it. A perfect Woodie Allen movie scene!

Q: But the lesson of the '74 Cyprus crisis was really that NATO just wasn't set up to do much about squabbles between its own members. Is that not a fair reading?

LISSELT: Yes, it was evident that they didn't know quite what to make of it and what to do about it. It clearly was a crisis provoked by the Greek government in its efforts to set up their own man in downtown Nicosia, and the Turks had had enough. The hatred that exists between those two people was shocking to me. I later worked on Southern European affairs - we'll get around to that later assignment - but you couldn't believe it. It was worse than the animosity that most French feel toward the British, which is saying a lot, you know.

Q: *Were you involved in the NATO-French relations?*

LISSELT: No, not particularly. I mean I was involved at least peripherally in everything that the Secretary General was involved in, but more often not in important meetings, because Van Campen had to be there and there wasn't room for two of us. But I was

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well aware of how well represented the French were in NATO by a wonderful man, Ambassador François de Rose, truly one of the great French diplomats and thinkers on strategic matters, of whom the French didn't have very many these days. He had great skill at knowing when not to ask his government for instructions and when to speak in the NATO council without saying he was uninstructed, but everybody knew that he was being extremely careful and cooperative in every way that he could be because he believed in the North Atlantic Alliance. He was an Atlanticist. I think he's still alive, and I saw him in Paris later in my assignment, and I had a chance to pay tribute to him personally. He was very touched, but he was most interested in my French accent. He wondered where I'd learned my French, and I said, "Well, I spent a year in Paris at the Sorbonne." He said, "Yes, one can see that." That was a big compliment, coming from him.

Q: So, Mark, after three years, then, in Brussels, you returned to the Department. You were working under the director general, was that the case?

LISSFELT: Right, at the end of three years I was looking for an onward assignment. Arthur Hartman, who was then the Assistant secretary for European Affairs and who used to come to NATO meetings, I had known since London days and before that in the Department, when he was working for Under Secretary George Ball. Art had always been very cordial to me, although ours was not a particularly close friendship. On one of his NATO visits, Art asked, "What are you going to do next? What's your next assignment?" I said, "Well, I want to come back to the Department. I think it's time for the kids." By the way, we'd put our kids in the Belgian French-speaking schools all the time we were in Belgium, which was quite an experience for them and for us and something that I think has profited them all of their lives. We were driven away from the Department of Defense school, which was in a particularly bad state at the time, but also wanted to give our daughters the chance to learn a useful language. It was a struggle - the first six months were especially tough - but after awhile they really got ahold of the French, and as often happens in those foreign school situations, they became tops in their French classes, ahead of the Belgians, whose native language it was. But we wanted to come back



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to Washington because it was time for their high school years, and we wanted to get them back to Falls Church, Virginia, where we had a home and get them back in the very good school system there (Also, the age and health of our parents were important considerations.). It still is one of the best in the Washington area, and was then. So we wanted to leave. I said, "Arthur, I want to come back to the Department. Any jobs in the Bureau?" And he invited me to be his executive assistant. Well, when such an invitation comes and you're sitting in the cafeteria at NATO, you just practically jump for joy. Couldn't have been a better prospect so far as I was concerned.

Well, at the same time, the late Frank Meloy, my first boss-

*Q: Who died in Lebanon.*

LISSFELT: - who died in Lebanon - was staffing up his new mission to Lebanon at the time—this was the summer his assassination in '76 - and he had asked the Department to get me as his political counselor, which I really didn't want to do, with all due respects to Frank. I really wanted to go back home. Frankly, in the spring, I was fighting this off, saying I already had an assignment, thinking I could go to the job in Hartman's office, which was ideal. Although it was another staff job, I was able to submerge that negative and I was resisting going up until the moment that Frank Meloy suddenly was killed. Well, everybody knew about it except the Department's Personnel Department, who somehow didn't or couldn't take my name off a list to go to Lebanon at his request! The only reason I was on that list was because Frank had asked for me, and I was resisting it. Not everybody seeks to go back to Washington, as you know.

So suddenly a friend of mine who was working for Carol Laise, Gib Lanpher, was trying to get free from the job as her executive assistant and I don't know how he got wind of me, but next thing I knew I was put forward and I had the job. And I went back there checking in in August of 1976 as Carol's executive assistant in the front office of Personnel. Art Wortzel was her deputy, wonderful guy, hard-working, smart as they come, whom I found

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in the small front office staff - what turned out to be only a 10-month assignment. It really wasn't my cup of tea, I must say. I was interested in the personal intrigues, but really not a player. Also, I don't think that Carol Laise and I were on the same wavelength. Her only instruction to me, taking over the job, was "I want you to tell me what to do. That's your job. You tell me what I should get involved in and what I should do." Well, I took that to heart and tried it a couple of times, but I never really was terribly successful. Larry Eagleburger, by the way, was Undersecretary for Management at the time and that was a strain. I don't think those two were on the same wavelength very often either.

Q: What kind of differences would they have? How would that play out? Did they have a different approach in terms of the workings of the personnel system - promotions, assignments?

LISSELT: I think it was more personal. It was just the chemistry probably wasn't right, and Carol, to her credit, kept pushing Larry to convene groups and deal with - the keyword at the time was structure - the "structure" of the Department's personnel system, including the Foreign Service. It was a misshapen pear, and something had to be done to restore it to more of a pyramid than a pear, to simplify. And he'd resisted doing this - at all events. He was very close to Kissinger, who was the Secretary by then - and I think Carol was more to be a recipient of his instructions than she really wanted to be. She was a very strong willed and independent person, but she was very fair to me. A job came open as the deputy director of the Office of Western European Affairs, which was a kind of a substantive job. I thought it would get me back to a good geographic bureau working for Ed Rowell, who was the office director.

Q: Before we get into that, were you, as a staff, are you personally subject to all sorts of pressures to be intermediary to the director general for special assignments. How did that play out? What was the atmosphere in all this?

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LISSFELT: Occasionally, but the director general of the Foreign Service had the hardest job in the entire American diplomatic service. It's the same in any foreign service, because they have to make decisions that affect people and their families' lives, all the time, and most despairingly, people come to them in extremis - to the director general, not to me - although sometimes they'd come to me asking about an approach or how to get to see her. She would see almost anybody, to her great credit. And these people would go in with these horrendous tales or one terrible assignment after another, divorces, broken families: "I need a good assignment where I can take my wife." They brought just the saddest stories to her. I used to look in the waiting room of her office and see these forlorn families - sometimes the whole family out there - and she had a very limited power to do much except listen to them sympathetically and say she'd do what she could within the system. But again, I was very much on the fringes of that. People could get to her directly, so they didn't bother with me very much.

Art Wortzel, her deputy, a dynamic and smart guy, really ran the whole personnel system with a very firm hand. This was the time when the Carter administration was coming in, and I was there and instrumental in helping her staff ambassadorial changeovers, to keep track of comings and goings. I drafted the famous short cable that goes out to all ambassadors telling them in no uncertain terms to submit their resignations so that the President could choose whom he wanted to change, monitoring that and getting after the people who refused or delayed.

And the hardest one - I'll never forget it - was Robert Strauss-Hup#, then the ambassador at NATO, who absolutely refused to think that the republic could endure without his contribution as the representative to the Alliance. And he put it in those terms, and it became rather hilarious. It was really kind of sad, but finally she struck a deal with him and convinced him to leave. I mentioned Art Wortzel. He had to deal with the political appointees who came out of places, for example, in Central America expecting the most extraordinary kinds of financial rewards and bonuses and bribes and you name it to leave

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their posts - I mean some of it was criminal. And Art was very tough. He knew the rules as well, if not better, than anybody, but to move some of these people - particularly I have some memories some of them we used to call "the toads" in Central America, Nicaragua and El Salvador, places like that—was incredible. It was again almost criminal activity. They just wanted more money. It was pretty bad.

*Q: One thinks back on directors general, and there have been some very strong ones - one thinks of George Vest and Loy Henderson-*

LISSFELT: John Clark.

*Q: John Clark. But Carol Laise had a reputation as a strong personage, and to hear you say that she was so limited in her authority and what she could really do as top career person in the State personnel system, with only political appointees at the level above her, that's it's not reassuring, that she was that limited.*

LISSFELT: Well, it was the reality. Many of the cases brought to her, of course, were insoluble. I mean they were family disputes, aggravated perhaps by assignments, but getting an assignment of their dreams wasn't necessarily going to do anything more than prolong the family's dispute in some other geographic region of the world. So she was very respected, I think. Kissinger appointed her and liked her, as far as I know. I think Larry respected her. I don't know whether he liked her or not; I don't have any way to judge. She was a scratchy, tough individual who had to deal... Again, as you remember at the time, Jimmy Carter had started this ambassadorial appointments review committee that was made up from insiders and outsiders to review all ambassadorial appointments and to pass on them. Candidates often had to testify to this committee made up of journalists and other people from around Washington - all sorts, some of them hacks, some of them with their own axes to grind, you know. That was a process that she had to engineer appointments through with help from Personnel and a young man named Pat

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Kennedy, who was staff aide to Larry Eagleburger and is now the assistant secretary for Administration.

Q: But you then heard of the good assignment as a deputy in the Western European Affairs Office and Carol Laise didn't stand in your way-

LISSFELT: That's the point. She could have. She was very amenable. She knew what was going on because it was inside her own house. The only people who resisted it were the senior officer branch. My rank was FSO-3 and it was a 2 job, so they resisted their own boss until Carol just fuming called them and said, "Do it." A typical day in Personnel! But the main point, to her credit, was that she didn't resist my move to a job I wanted. She could've been difficult or embarrassed me. She was quite cordial. She said, "If that's what you want to do, that seems like a good opportunity." And again, maybe she hoped that I would be replaced by somebody that was more in sync with her - I don't know. We were perfectly cordial with one another, nonetheless; she and her husband, Ellsworth Bunker, gave me and my wife, plus two other couples, a nice farewell dinner.

I was replaced by a guy, really, who was chosen by Larry Russell, who headed the administrative side of Personnel. He wanted to have his guy in the front office who would be beholden to him and keep him informed on what his boss, the director general, was up to. It was very transparent to me, but how well that assignment went, I have no idea.

Q: *So you had known Ed Rowell before.*

LISSFELT: No, I hadn't, as a matter of fact. I came into his office, and I'll never forget, his first words were, "Oh, so you're Mark Lissfelt." Maybe he'd seen my face in the cafeteria, but here was a deputy being foisted on him by the central system and wasn't somebody whom he knew anything about or who had any particular qualifications, but Ed was very cordial and received me with open arms. The job had been vacant for a while and he

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needed somebody to do it. And I came recommended, and I think we turned out to be good colleagues. I think I was an effective deputy.

*Q: And your office spanned France, Spain-*

LISSFELT: Well, we used to think it was the big leagues. It was full of allies. It had various peregrinations, various shapes, over the years. One, it had the Iberian Peninsula, Spain and Portugal - that's what Ed's background was, by the way, and it had France and Italy. It had the Vatican. We did not have the Benelux. And we had Malta. So it was a very mixed bag, but as it turned out, after I had a year into the job, Jim Dobbins, who was the French Desk officer, moved on, and the job position was eliminated. I was given the France portfolio, which was a very good thing.

*Q: That is, you were both the deputy and the Desk for France.*

LISSFELT: Yes, and with an assistant named Ruth Whiteside, who's risen in the Department, as you know, becoming immensely successful, is now the deputy assistant secretary for Personnel. She came in as a mid-level entry, part of the program to bring women into the Department, from Rice University, where she'd been an assistant professor of history. We hit it off right away, and we're still very good friends. So I had her to keep an eye one of the nitty-gritty, and she did Malta as well, which was always a thorn in our sides. A man named Dom Mintoff was the leader there, and he would do anything but see the American ambassador, as Joan Clark found when she went out there as an ambassador and he would not see her. But for me, it was a break because it gave me a substantive regular job as opposed to being simply the director and sort of keeping watch on everything else in the office.

So I had a country, a fascinating and important country, that I knew a little bit about, had lived in and knew some of the language, and had a very interesting embassy, both in Paris, where Arthur Hartman was the ambassador at the time, and Warren Zimmerman was the political counselor, and Chris Chapman was the DCM, all of whom I knew. And

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I had a very interesting French embassy in Washington. Fran#ois de Boulaye was the ambassador, a most cordial man, whom I used to see at all hours, and whom I also had the pleasure of entertaining years later in Paris at my residence as DCM with his wife. That was a positive development in my time in that bureau, but that was very much department bureaucracy, Washington bureaucracy, interagency groups, visitors, briefing papers - the usual stuff consumes us when at the home office.

Q: Close backstopping for one of the larger, more important embassies, in Paris, of course - day to day on the phone with Chris Chapman and Warren Zimmerman.

LISSFELT: Yes, and then Jack Maresca succeeded Chris Chapman as DCM, as I recall, and he was on the other end of the phone, and that was easy and cordial. But you also, had the feeling, and it's very important to emphasize this if I haven't emphasized it enough, that you had a real job and were working in an area that counted. I mean these are important countries. These are allies. These are big players. You weren't down in the bowels working on some godforsaken little island kingdom. It was referred to as "playing in the major leagues."

Q: *Were there some major points of difference with the French it that period? There always are.*

LISSFELT: Oh, yes, there always were and always will be. Most of them centered around things going on in NATO - civil aviation, that kind of thing. But we had also working in the office this wonderful human institution, E. J. Beagle, Ed Beagle, who had worked on France forever, some 30 years. He knew where all the skeletons were buried, knew France very well, knew a lot of people, and was a huge asset with my responsibilities for France. It turned out that Ed Beagle was also from Pittsburgh and had gone to the same high school that I had gone to years ago. When I learned this, I snuck up behind him and sang in his ear the fight song of old Peabody High and brought tears to his eyes.

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*Q: He was a civil servant.*

LISSFELT: Civil servant.

Q: You know, in that time there were a number of civil servants like that. There was a man whom you must have known when you worked on Greece, Charlie Lagoudakis, who was a repository of knowledge over 30 years on Greece. That kind of civil service positions just aren't there, don't exist any more, and the final repository is the FSO who's there for two years, three years, and he or she is gone. It's a big loss.

LISSFELT: I worked for a civil servant named Phil Wilson in the INR period a certain length of time. He was an old German hand, and his son, Tom, came to Berlin when I was there, worked under me. But Phil went off, too, as civil servants sometimes did, to the embassy in Bonn for a two or three year period and came back just up to date and was immensely useful in the Department. And there's another one in the NATO office who's retired in recent years, Eric Rehfeld, who's just steeped in anything to do with the Alliance, and all the esoterics of salaries of the international staff in NATO and things like that that nobody else wanted to work on, he worked on these questions and he knew the issues well.

*Q: In that job you had to travel back and forth to some of the countries you worked on, France particularly?*

LISSFELT: Yes, not much, but we'd get a good trip a year, and I got to Paris when the Hartmans were there and stayed with them and went out, I think in that period, and visited the consulate in Strasbourg. I just ran into the old consul general, Ken Kurtz, with whom I stayed there at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Retired Group of New England, and he wondered how we knew each other, and I told him how. I reminded him of breakfast in his basement kitchen before I left his Strasbourg residence.



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Q: Did you find as you rose in the Service - you were a deputy then in a major office, that you were taking on a mentoring and career development role, that you were looking for junior and mid-grade officers, helping them with their assignments, that kind of thing?

LISSFELT: Well, that became the major job of the deputies in these bureaus, not just in our office but everywhere. The deputy dealt a lot with personnel staffing, and almost even with a vengeance they became personnel officers, trying to get the best staffs for our office and our embassies overseas. Office directors also were very involved, too, when they had the time. Ruth Whiteside came into the office out of university, for example, in mid-career, and I remember my initial conversation with her. I said, "Ruth, do you know what you're getting into here? You're an outsider who's coming in at a certain grade up the ladder, and some people around this building are going to resent you. Has that occurred to you?" "Oh, yes," she replied. I said, "Well, okay. Be ready for it."

Q: Okay, this is a test on a separate machine to see if we don't have that same echo chamber. I think the first one was defective, and the question is how audible this is going to be, because I don't want to get up to Boston again and strike out with the same interviewee that we did the last time because of defective equipment.

LISSFELT: Well, as I was saying, I didn't neglect looking after the people who worked for me and serving at the appropriate time down the line as a mentor to those who needed a push or needed advice, counseling, and I think I was pretty good at it.

*Q: You rounded out, Mark, that stretch in Washington with a year at the National War College.*

LISSFELT: Right, I had applied for training before in the Department. The only training I'd had was the basic officers' course when I came in the A-100 course. I never had language training; I never even had the consular course, because I was yanked off to my first assignment before it could happen. And in Bamako I had seen and been interested in

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applying for a fellowship to go to Southern California University, in hopes that it might get me out of Bamako, Mali, earlier. And that never came about, but I had been interested in training and wanted to do some of it, even though I came in with a master's degree from Fletcher before joining the Department.

But I wanted to stay in Washington, which is the other side of the consideration of possible choices. I did not want to move. So that limited things, decidedly, as to what the options were, and they were War College or the Industrial College of the Armed Forces and a couple of other things that I've long since forgotten. Anyway, I did opt for the War College and got it, and happily spent the school year '79-80 at Fort McNair. That was the year of the Afghanistan war, if you remember that, December 19, 1979, when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan. It was a sort of glorious but too quick experience. We just went from one subject to the other, flitting along. Ambassador Monty Stearns was the vice president of the Defense University, as it's known, at the time, and it was an occasion to get to know him. He and his wife, Tony, have become good friends, living up here near us in Massachusetts. My one reflection, though, when I think back on it, was what a mixed bag that the Department of State sent over to be its contingent, and there probably were 13 or 14 sent to join this 120 student body organization, which was one-third Army, one-third navy, which included marines, one-third air force - 40, 40, 40 - and then the rest were civilian. And of the civilian roughly half were State Department, but we also had in our class, by the way, a key aide of the Senate's Armed Forces military construction committee, who was getting his reward, a year off. But the State Department gaggle was a very mixed bag, and I'm afraid that the Department used the assignment to reward people who worked in Personnel rather generously so that the group, although there were some outstanding people in it, was a very mixed representation of the Department's "best," if you will, in front of all these military people.

The War College was very enthusiastic, as you know, still is I think, to have good State Department representation, because we brought into these classes with the fellow students an experience in international affairs which was almost unequaled by any of

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the others. They had their military experiences around the world but they didn't have the perspective. After all, the War College was trying to inculcate people during this year off to learn a little bit about the world out there. So we were part of the teaching process as well as learning.

I commuted, by the way, with Jacques Klein, a good friend who's off someplace in Bosnia right now, but I think he was one of the youngest ever to go to the War College (He went, not as a State Department representative but as a reserve U.S. Air Force brigadier general.). He's now a major general in the Air Force Reserves. But he was a breath of fresh air, I must say. We commuted, carpooled, from Falls Church together, and I enjoyed Jacques, liked a lot of the military I met at the College, and found lots of them extremely intelligent and dedicated. The military contingent also had its collection of people who would have been sent there because the services didn't know what else to do with them, or was rewarding them for a horrendous experience in their career. So we had all sorts of people in this 120 gaggle of folks. At our commencement, by the way, Senator Gary Hart was our speaker. Don't ask me what he said, but it was something about politics and the military.

*Q: Did you find the course of study a rigorous expanding of your horizons?*

LISSFELT: Well, I wish I could say that, but not particularly. I found it very frustrating because we did the whole First World War and its causes, sort of, in a couple of hours and a few readings. It was kind of fun, but mostly the benefit was the associations with your fellow, in this case military, officers most often and vice versa for them. You get to know what kind of people are in the various institutions. That helps to do away with the stereotypes, negative stereotypes, you know. And that certainly worked with me. I came to respect a lot of them. There were their share of fools in the group, but there were a share fools in the Department of State contingent. So it was a leveling experience.

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Intellectually, no; I enjoyed mostly the high-level visitors that came there and addressed the group week after week after week. They could get almost anybody to come, and it was interesting to see them up front and to hear, for example, the commandant of the U.S. Marine Corps at the time, big tall man, say that the single most important question for intake of Marines was whether or not they had a high school diploma. That was the signal, that somebody who could finish high school and get the diploma and see that through had a chance of making it in the Marine Corps. Without that, it was a risky thing, he said.

*Q: And then you would have had a trip abroad and part of that year?*

LISSFELT: I opted for the Eastern Europe trip, because by then I knew my next assignment was going to be to go to Bonn to replace Vlad Lehovich as a deputy political counselor working for Marten Van Heuven. Bill Woessner was the DCM, and Walter Stoessel was still ambassador. And I was just delighted at this prospect. I got the job with the great help of Tom Niles, who was the office director for Central Europe, and Bill Woessner on the other end, both of whom knew me. I wasn't one of the old German club, I did have some German experience in the military and was going to brush up my German, so they accepted me into that very august club.

*Q: You had spoken some German.*

LISSFELT: Yes, and I was in the Army outside of Frankfurt for a year and a half where I mostly dealt with Americans, but, yes, I knew some German. German, as I maybe said earlier, is a difficult language; as Mark Twain said: "Life is too short to learn German,; and I'm living proof of that. I knew I was going to Bonn, and I'd hoped on the War College Eastern European trip to swing back through Bonn. It had a double advantage for me. The whole aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979 threw into turmoil any trips to Eastern Europe, so we ended up having an Eastern European trip that went only to places like Berlin, Vienna, Belgrade, and back through Bonn. That was about it. We were very curtailed in where we could go. We were to go to Czechoslovakia, we

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were to go to Hungary and places like that. The Moscow trip was something separate. I remember Belgrade was a grubby town. It really didn't appeal to me at all, I must say. I was so depressed by what I saw of Yugoslavia except for one thing, namely the War Museum there in Belgrade, which is an extraordinary thing, I guess a very special favorite of Tito. But Larry Eagleburger was the ambassador at the time. Jack Scanlan was his deputy. I never well forget our briefing with Larry Eagleburger, when said in no uncertain terms, "These rumors that once Tito dies Yugoslavia is going to fly apart - they're a lot of crap. He's been around long enough to establish this as a country. It is not going to fly apart, in spite of what you people may hear back in Washington, so just forget it." Well, ensuing history proved him, on that occasion, incorrect.

Q: He was frequently wrong over the years, one has the impression, on Yugoslavia and our reaction to the developing Bosnia crisis one has the impression also from some of the accounts that he was quite bored in the time that he was there as ambassador after the adrenaline of his high-level positions in Washington. The question "What do you do here?" was one that was tough to answer.

LISSFELT: Could be. I couldn't sense that or couldn't hear that. There is a wonderful story of his arrival. He sent over a personal vehicle, a yellow Cadillac convertible, which he apparently picked up in Amsterdam at the docks and drove all the way to Belgrade, and, of course, he was known as Lawrence of Macedonia, because of his going there as a young officer in the aftermath of an earthquake. He was in the embassy with David Anderson working for George Kennan as ambassador in the Kennedy administration. I don't know about his judgments, other than the one I just cited, and seeing him on television now is to see a guy who readily admits that he finds it a very dangerous situation and that he hasn't the faintest idea of what to do about Yugoslavia. He's quite candid in saying that - very outspoken guy.

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Q: ...War College years, you're off to Bonn. You say you knew that assignment was coming down the line for a little bit. You had a chance to prepare for it. You knew what you were getting into. You knew the people there.

LISSFELT: Yes, fortunately, and I had a chance to avail myself of some of FSI's language reinforcement for the better part of a month, right after I left the War College. Graduation, as I recall, was in June. Both my wife and I were at FSI for more than four weeks, might have been even as long as two months, refreshing and bringing up to speed a little bit our German. And then we were off, arriving late summer, in 1980. By then our oldest daughter had gone off to William and Mary and the second daughter was going to William and Mary, too, one year after the eldest. So, we were off to Bonn with our two youngest daughters and that same Irish setter.

*Q: I thought you said it was a corgi.*

LISSFELT: Well, the first one was a corgi, from London days and then to Bamako. We've always had dogs in the Foreign Service. We violated two pieces of advice that were given our new class when we came in in the A100 course: (1) don't have children and (b) don't have pets; in the Foreign Service, it's too complicated. We've always had pets and we had four daughters, and there you are. It is complicating, but so is life. Anyway, we arrived in Bonn, welcomed by Marten Van Heuven, chief of the Political Section, and moved into one of the embassy houses, fortunately in Plittersdorf, along the Rhine River. The U.S. community was built when the German government moved on short notice from Frankfurt to Bonn to be nearer to Konrad Adenauer's home, which was just across the river from where we lived. We settled in there to, again, a wonderful establishment, although Ambassador Walter Stoessel was really on his way out.

And we had the elections, of course, in the fall of 1980, which brought Ronald Reagan and George Shultz to the fore, Shultz after Haig as Secretary of State. We had no idea who was going to be his ambassador to succeed Stoessel when he left. I was the deputy

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head of a large Political Section. There must have been 13 officers in that section. We had a two-man foreign division; we had a two-person internal politics; we had a three-person (including the person from the Defense Department) political and military affairs section, plus a section of two plus a lawyer - three people - doing nothing but things relating to Berlin, the so-called "Bonn Group." We ran the U.S. government policies in Berlin, and I, as the deputy political counselor, was the main supervisor of all of these people.

*Q: The counselor was Marten Van Heuven?*

LISSFELT: Yes, when I first arrived.

*Q: He was a Germanophile and a Europeanist.*

LISSFELT: Yes, he had taken over. He'd started as a deputy, Dutch-born, and spoke very good German, I think, which was very closely related to his native Dutch. I think it helped a lot. He was a solid guy and very supportive, very good friend, as was Ruth, his wife, who was running the Consular Section.

*Q: Who is now the consul general in Milan.*

LISSFELT: Milan, right. We also had a labor attach# there, Bob Senser, who, I must say for the first time in my Foreign Service career because his work was so good and so interesting, got me reading labor officer reports. As his supervisor, I reviewed his product, which was so good. I will never forget what a good officer he was, in spite of the fact that he was supported by a secretary, a native German, a woman, who was little bit erratic. For example, she would type Bob's work, he would sign them and authorize them, and she would promptly file them all carefully, including the originals. And he wondered after a while why he was getting no responses to any of his requests, and he discovered in the file that this fabled secretary of his was filing everything, and nothing he did, letters or cables, left the embassy in Bonn. An amusing sidelight.

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We were very preoccupied in this period with political-military affairs. It was the time of missiles when the Russians were introducing missiles, and we were trying to get the alliance to counter with similar missiles, short-range missiles, in Europe. Also we were trying to get the German government to pick up more and more of the responsibility (That, after all, was ours.) for paying the costs of billeting our forces in Germany. They paid a lot, but the neglect that the U.S. government was visiting on its armed forces over the waning years of Jimmy Carter's presidency was clearly visible in Germany. I remember visiting with Larry Eagleburger when he came out. We went down to one of my old haunts in Hanau, where I'd been in the Army. We visited a motor pool. And it made the worst junk shop that you would see anywhere outside of any American city look good. It was disgraceful. It was out of doors, sort of under a tent, and these guys were pleading for money for spare parts and so forth. This penury culminated in instructions to Walt Stoessel. It was called the "Stoessel d#marche." He was instructed to approach the German defense minister with a great request for much more contribution from the Germans to the financing of refurbishing and upgrading the condition of U.S. billets, of motor vehicles, and you name it - basic stuff which the U.S. was not taking care of. I think the Germans really finessed that. We never got an answer to the famous Stoessel d#marche.

*Q: The German leadership at that time-*

LISSELT: It was led by Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, a Social Democrat. His favorite U.S. president was Jerry Ford, it was said, because Jerry tended to listen to him. Schmidt was a great preacher.

*Q: He was an academic fellow, in that case.*

LISSELT: Well, he was actually a financier. After years as mayor of Hamburg, then Defense Minister, he had been the finance minister. Interestingly, as a financier and as an international economist, he'd gotten to Arthur Burns in his capacity chairman of [the]



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Council of Economic Advisors under Eisenhower and subsequently as head of the Federal Reserve under Nixon for eight years. Well, lo and behold, who is sent as U.S. ambassador to Bonn after almost a year-long gap to replace Walter Stoessel but Arthur Burns, almost 80 years of age.

*Q: But with his age was he able to function?*

LISSELT: He was effective. Burns arrived with this wonderful wife of his, who led poetry readings and so forth, and, a man almost 80, he needed his rest and so forth, but he was a man of energy, extremely smart and very shrewd. A conversation with Arthur Burns, we always used to say, was like eating an artichoke. You peeled one leaf off at a time. Anything you said to him led to a question in return, and then your answer to that led to yet another question. He peeled everything back to basics, the result of which was that smart people quickly learned: do not open your trap [mouth] to Arthur Burns until you know exactly what you're talking about, the origins, and can answer an infinite amount of questions. This practice made large Friday staff meetings very quiet sessions, with the exception of a couple of fools. Forty-four people from U.S. government agencies - we had some 25 or 30 U.S. government agencies represented in Bonn - met once a week with Arthur Burns when he became the ambassador. He would always let Bill Woessner, his DCM, run the meetings, but everybody knew to keep their mouths shut unless they really had something to say, except one guy: the deputy head of the economic section, of all persons, who had the temerity even to disagree with Arthur Burns and to argue with him in front of 40-some colleagues, who all felt that they were witnessing a hanging - which, in fact, they were. He was the only guy removed from the staff by the ambassador. I think he was responsible - the Economic Section was responsible, anyway - for sending in a cable which had Burns name at the bottom of it, as all cables did, on the business cycle in Germany, which made some observations and drew some conclusions. Burns read the comeback copy of this cable later, seeing it for the first time, and was infuriated. It turns out that he was probably the world's expert on business cycles - Ph.D. thesis and so forth.

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Well, they sent a cable immediately to the Department, which is a sure way to get the first one read, disowning the cable, saying ignore it, it was a simple mistake.

*Q: How could somebody have been that stupid? What a dumb thing to do!*

LISSELT: Well, people didn't know a lot about him at first. Quickly they began to learn. Now to be so stupid as not to know when to shut up and have such bad judgment as to argue with him on a point of economics and correct him, it didn't take you long to learn that that was not prudent, especially since he was more often right than wrong, particularly in the area of economics. During the period of Burns' breaking in, I had the burden of being the acting head of the Political Section because Marten Van Heuven left for some reason six months after my arrival (Those events are not connected!). Bill Woessner, the DCM, held the political counselor job for Dick Barkley, his former deputy in the Department in the Central European office. Barkley I knew; he was a friend. Anyway I was blessed to be the acting counselor for these six months awaiting Barkley's arrival, when Arthur Burns was just new and just settling in. I think, fortunately, for some reason, Burns and I seemed to hit it off. I tried every once in a while to be a little bit humorous, which he liked. He appreciated me, I think. He wanted to have a lively staff meeting, and he, more often than not, would be chuckling. Maybe he was laughing at me as a damn fool, but he did like that and, in fact, he even acceded to the idea that my wife come on the payroll to help his wife, running their residence. This arrangement, I believe, was the DCM's wife's suggestion in desperation, because Burns' wife was in need of help. It turned out she didn't want help; knew what she wanted. So, my wife's association in the role of her helper was short-lived

Before I forget it, the funniest event there in the Burns era, two funny events. I'll recite one related to a dinner that he had with this then Soviet ambassador, I think was Semyonov, (Soviet negotiator in the SALT talks, with Alex Johnson), at Burns's house. I was at the dinner - a dinner of maybe 15 or 17 people around a large table - and Mrs. Helen Burns had made sure that the ambassador and his entourage from the embassy were shown

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around the residence and saw her husband's paintings that they had there, for Burns liked to paint, by the way (He painted very geometric things.).

*Q: Abstract? Modern?*

LISSFELT: Yes, abstract, and just sort of geometric patterns they had, in lots of them. But he had other kinds of paintings with lights over them for illumination. And this fascinated Semyonov, how well displayed they were. Well, Helen, in her sweet, innocent way, promptly suggested in front of everybody that the embassy electrician was at the disposal of the Russian ambassador to have him come to the Soviet embassy and wire up all his paintings with lights overhead. Everyone at the table, including the Russians, you know, were all sort of laughing at that. It was a wonderful exhibit of her charming innocence. An American electrician wiring the Soviet embassy!

The other incident related to Burns, who hosted most of the cabinet ministers at lunch at the embassy. He had a little ambassador's dining room built on the top floor of that old embassy building just for this purpose, and one day a charming, lovely female German minister, whose name escapes me now, came. And it was a terrible day in winter - rainy, cold - and I went down with Burns to meet her when she arrived, introduced them, and the two of them went upstairs to have lunch. She got out of the car - and you have to know German to appreciate this, I suppose - and she spoke pretty good English, and in fluent English she said, "Oh, Mr. Ambassador, what shitty weather we're having today!" The Germans have the expression *Scheisswetter*, which they use, as a perfectly acceptable phrase, like the French use *merde* [damn] often, but this was their first encounter. And I thought this is going to be the end of a beautiful relationship. He was in total shock. Anyway, they went on to be good friends.

Another person that he did meet and size up way ahead of the rest of us was Helmut Kohl, who was still a leader of the CDU, not yet by any means, the Chancellor. He went off to lunch with him and came back, after having gotten briefing papers from us that this

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is a “stalwart in the CDU,” a “pedestrian type,” “never going to go anywhere.” And he came back, and he assembled us and said, “I want to tell you gentlemen, that is a man of substance of whom we're going to hear much.” And of course, in a matter of a year or two later, there was the Wende, 'turning' out the Socialist SPD government and Helmut Kohl became and stayed Chancellor for 16 years. I'll never forget that insight of Arthur Burns.

I would go with him, by the way, during this period when I was the acting political counselor, on his calls on Helmut Schmidt. They were something to witness. Sometimes on a Sunday afternoon, they would just get together and talk about lots of economics, and so forth, but he'd take me along as notetaker. Burns got addicted to this idea of having a written record. As it turned out, he rather liked it. And I can remember sitting with Helmut Schmidt, who didn't welcome my presence at all, sitting at a table like this square card table, and me sitting over there frantically taking notes on this conversation while Burns called him Helmut and he called him Mr. Ambassador - but they were old friends - you know, and he really objected. He said, “I object to that man sitting there. I don't want this conversation to end up in the files of the Department of State.” And Burns reached over and patted him on the arm and said, “Helmut, never you mind.” And he turned to me, and he said, “Mr. Lissfelt is my responsibility. I assure you whatever he does will be handled with great discretion.” To me he said, “You continue doing what you're doing.” But I sat there feeling about as welcome as I don't know what at the party. Helmut Schmidt, whom years later I met in Paris at a celebration, sat at dinner with him right across the dinner table at the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the International Herald Tribune, looked at me, and he remembered me, and I reminded him that I used to see him with Arthur Burns, and he didn't say one word to me through that dinner. Very painful.

Q: That's a great story. The relations with Germany were pretty close in those years, but that was the time of the star fighters or some political-military difficulties?

LISSFELT: Oh, there were all sorts of things. You know, we were trying to install a whole helicopter unit along the Rhine. It was causing a huge brouhaha in domestic politics there.

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The main thing was the balancing to the Russian short-range missile effort, which was argued for years and years, but there were all sorts of things other than the financial things and the political-military, but by and large, relations were excellent. I mean, we talked to each other very candidly and they had still an amazing deference to the American government. The American ambassador was still a kind of a proconsul, flying up to Berlin, where he had a house, and in Berlin he was a proconsul. We were still sovereign, along with the French and the British, as you may recall, in Berlin during the occupation years. But by and large, things worked well. I mean, the most intimate kind of exchanges all the way down through the Political Section and the economic section with everybody, an openness that was equal certainly to anything we had with any other nations on the face of the earth. They had their points of view, and you never went to them with any hope, for example, of urging them to take on immigration from among the boat people leaving Vietnam, which we did around the world at a certain period. They were not a nation of immigrants, to put it mildly, except those of German origin. If you went to them selling German so-called Volga-Germans (there was quite a population living along the Volga River in Russia) they would be receptive and open to that. These people could come and become citizens the day after. They didn't want any Vietnamese there. The Vietnam War they didn't approve of.

*Q: When that would be, the Gastarbeiter, the guest-workers, hadn't yet arrived, or were there Turkish?*

LISSFELT: Well, actually, there were plenty of Turks there, and the problem hadn't become as acute as it did on the question of citizenship simply because their children were still fairly young, but with the maturity of these children, who lived in Germany and spoke native German, it became more and more a problem. And there were hundreds of thousands of them, and this was a very acute problem up in Berlin, where a lot of them were. Again, the problems were workable for the Germans, and there was an openness, and an access, that was really extraordinary. Hans-Dietrich Genscher was the foreign minister, the leader of the liberal party, the balancing party in this coalition, who one day in

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1982 decided he'd had enough of the Socialists and flipped, split, and that's what brought Helmut Kohl in, a new alliance with the party that had been allied with the Socialists for years.

*Q: You were, of course, in the midst of the cold war. Was the concept of unification - it was unthinkable.*

LISSELT: Lip service was always paid to the American "basic policy." I mean, we used to say it ad nauseam: eventual, peaceful reunification of Germany is one of our policy goals, in our long-term interests, at the right moment in history, sort of thing - nobody for a moment foreseeing what was to happen in 1989, with the fall of the Berlin Wall.

*Q: Well, having consolidated in Bonn, then you moved two years later to be a proconsul.*

LISSELT: Vice proconsul. I'm always a "vice;" always a bridesmaid, never a bride, it seems, in my career. One day talking to Dick Barkley, who was then the political counselor—he'd arrived, and we, of course, had great relations, good friend, always admired Dick, and I was inquiring about paying a visit to Berlin in the winter, just going on leave up there—and suddenly Dick sat me down and said, "How would you like to be assigned to Berlin? They're looking for a new deputy to the minister there." It still was a divided city. We had a minister at the U.S. mission in the West, and we had in the East an ambassador, later Dick Barkley, by the way. I became Arthur Burns's candidate to go up there and be Nelson Ledsky's deputy, a very unusual extension of my time in Germany which then was already three years long.

Nelson was a friend, I just think one of the real characters in the Foreign Service, the world of Nelson, and he was certainly an old German hand and knew German and the Germans. He's a very spontaneous and sometimes disruptive character, and he had his share of enemies. And he had a way of speaking his mind - and to Arthur Burns and anybody else who'd listen, the governor-mayor of Berlin included. Burns didn't know him that well, and he did know me, and I had the impression - in fact, I was told - that I was Burns's

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candidate to go up there because he wanted me - not to keep an eye on Nelson—but just he wanted to have somebody up there whom he knew first-hand.

*Q: The idea of keeping an eye on Nelson, of toning him down, ialmost an impossibility.*

LISSELT: An impossible task, and it shouldn't be done. People like that are to be rewarded in situations like that. So suddenly in the summer of 1983, we got on our way to what was unheard of, another three years' service in Germany. Nobody could believe that this was happening to anybody - choice assignments and we knew it. We went to Berlin for three very happy years, two under Nelson and then one under John Kornblum, his successor. All the accumulated rules, precedents, and regulations that had grown up over the years of Berlin occupation were enough to drive you crazy. I helped to supervise the place on Nelson's behalf, but Nelson was very involved in everything important certainly. Very cordial to me, very supportive of me. He had his share of fights with his secretary and other people, but I must say, not to mention the U.S. military, Nelson was one of my best supporters, and I'm just very fond of the guy, a real character.

The only time I really had to do something against his wishes was at the explicit direction of Burns. Nelson had left on home leave and I was in charge of the mission, and before Nelson had gone, he had a big problem with the people who were trying to sell personal computers and modernizing the State Department and getting it on line. And Nelson in his wisdom saw the threat in this business. You put these computers at everybody's desk, and whether you like it or not, people will be chattering back and forth and you, in charge, rapidly lose control over the policy of the institution that you're responsible for. And he refused to help them, and he was very rude to the technicians from the Department and sent them packing. Well, they went back to Bonn, and of course then he went on home leave, and then came a one-line instructions to me, Burns to Lissfelt, "You will see to and facilitate the prompt installation in Berlin of the link" (It was an experimental link. Bonn was one of the first embassies and this link to a subordinate, if you will, related post was an experiment.) "as soon as possible." Which, of course, I did.

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*Q: The 80-year-old political ambassador pushing the FSOs of the Department into the information age.*

LISSFELT: Well, he certainly did, as far as Berlin was concerned, because it existed in Bonn already to the tune of considerable construction of pipes and other infrastructure and so forth to lay it in. And it worked very well in the sections where people had it, and Bonn had had a good experience and thought it was wise to join Berlin to the network. But Nelson didn't, and I still think Nelson was very right in what he saw the implications of this were, but you can't stop progress.

*Q: One always thinks of Berlin in those years as the Le Carré capital. There must have been an element of intrigue.*

LISSFELT: Well, there was, but a lot of our concerns related to the military intelligence activities, which used to drive the CIA intelligence people round the bend. Many of the spies caught and exchanged for the top Russian spies that we had our hands on were in fact amateurish agents of the U.S. military who had been swept up by the intelligence apparatus of the East. They would collect these people and exchange them for some really terribly professional Russian spies that we had swept up over the years. This was incidentally a while later on, when Rick Burke became the ambassador, we had the exchange of Nathan Sharansky, famously, over the Glienicke Bridge. Sharansky is now a minister in the Israeli government, at the recent Wye Plantation peace process negotiations, of all things.

*Q: And you were somehow there at Checkpoint Charlie when the exchanges were made?*

LISSFELT: They were never made there; they were always made over the Glienicke Bridge. That's where Francis Gary Powers, the U-2 pilot who went down, was exchanged for a Russian spy named Abel. That was before our time. This was a connecting and



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transfer point in a part of Berlin where the bridge was divided in half, half in the West, half in the East.

Q: Could you as the deputy keep track of all of this? Did you feel that you were socially cut in? It's pretty compartmentalized stuff that is going on there.

LISSFELT: I don't think I knew the half of it, frankly. They had all these so-called "stovepipe" operations, down to Heidelberg, where the headquarters of the U.S. Army in Europe was, and that's who the U.S. commandant, who was the top man in Berlin, a two-star Army general, worked for. And these were constant potential points of friction. My first years there were with General James Botler, a commandant. He took Nelson with a grain of salt, was a very practical guy with a Harvard master's degree, a very sophisticated gentleman who knew what his job was and knew the limits and when not to try and play soldier-diplomat. He was succeeded by a general who was there most of the time we were there who seemed to have just the opposite view. He was then succeeded by a general who went over to the East and drank Bruderschaft, as they say, with the communist mayor in East Berlin. Dick Barkley, who was ambassador, was outraged. He always said this general violated all of the norms of the U.S. policy toward Berlin. But the days of spy intrigue and so forth were slightly on the wane. Frankly, what I knew about them was almost nothing. It wasn't in my job description and I wasn't in the chain of command for that kind of thing at all. I think Nelson knew a lot more than I did, but only probably back in the Department did they know much more.

Q: I've only known Nelson in the Greek context, but he's so informal and garrulous and extraverted, it's hard for me to think of him with the reserved Germans in more formality. How did he come across?

LISSFELT: Well, he had his detractors, but he also had many admirers. They kind of liked him. A German politician called him a real Mensch to me one day, and they said they just like him because he's such a spontaneous guy. But he also had his detractors. He was

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nothing loath to demand of the Germans: pay for this, pay for that in Berlin, it was their obligation, we were the sovereigns, and they damn well were going to do it. And he carried in some very disagreeable d#marches to the man who's still the governing mayor of Berlin, Eberhard Diepgen.

*Q: How was it with the other sovereign powers?*

LISSELT: A constant sort of a struggle. I got along very well at my level with the British, and I got along very well with the French because I could speak some French, and they just loved to have an American who could speak their language and they invited us when they didn't invite other Americans. I think they were so fed up with my counterpart, their political advisor - my role, my title, was "political advisor," although I was deputy minister. They had a fellow who, poor man, I think went around the bend, literally, and was forbidden by the French commandant to leave the compound up there. I think that helped enhance my status with them. I was fairly normal and spoke their language, and besides, we liked them. But, you know, they all had their agenda. The French were holding out there as a last vestige of part of their empire, and, for example, they had the Germans paying for the costs of training their recruits, whom they sent to Berlin, and the Germans uniformed them and armed them and paid for their training and sent them back, send another batch up. It was the French brigade, but at German expense.

The British were very cool and very colonial, you can well imagine, and not led by people who knew the language at all - i.e., their commandant. But everybody used to love the British parades, the French parties, and what did they like about us? Neither the parade nor the party. We did go to a lot of parades; there was a lot of showing the flag. We went to the East any time we wanted to, but we carried special passes to go through the Wall. The military always had to be in uniform, by the way. Berlin was fascinating and, of course, it was still divided, and we used to say to anybody, "If you want to understand the Cold War or postwar history, come to Berlin and stay a day and go to the Wall, look over and walk around, and you'll understand what it's all about, that it's not make-believe."

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Q: Back on the German years, before we leave them, what was the difference in the texture of life and work between Bonn and Berlin in those years? How did you compare the two experiences?

LISSFELT: The best description of life and working in Bonn that I received before I went out there was, "You are about to go to live and work in a small Midwestern American town in the 1950's." And Bonn, Bad Godesberg and Plittersdorf were certainly that. It was not the center of events, although it's where the capital was, and still is to this day, although it's moving to Berlin. Berlin was very much on the front line. You went there, either if you went by land through Russian controlled routes or you went by air, through the air corridors established by the postwar agreements, never above 10,000 feet. You had the sense of going to an island, an isolated place. And when you were there, although Berlin was a huge city, you were inside a wall, and you didn't go very far. If you went to other places in Eastern Europe, you had to go out through the wall and go through checkpoints and get special permits. And you were constantly aware of a Russian presence.

Q: *Any final thoughts before we leave Germany?*

LISSFELT: No, except fondest memories of the place and of the people. It was one of the finest embassies and missions that I've ever been associated with, only equaled by Paris, which we'll get to later, at the end of my overseas career. But fine staff, good leadership, working on very important issues, and a most hospitable environment.

Q: When you say that in Berlin you were at the front lines, was there one thing, one flash or pressure time that you remember that kind of captures the tensions of being way out there in Berlin that you think back on, the kind of thing that was going on in that Europe?

LISSFELT: Well, funnily, the most dramatic thing was in the spring of '86 in the terrorist bombing of the La Belle Disco. This, as you may recall, was a terrorist act. Somebody put a bomb under a bench on the side of one of the favorite hangouts for GI's with the

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clear intent to kill as many as possible, an event which has been traced back to Mr. Qadhafi and to a lot of Syrian involvement. Going to that place a few hours later the same day it occurred with Ambassador Rick Burt, and seeing this place largely cleaned up... Fortunately, in that whole thing only two people eventually died, but it was terribly dramatic. One GI had been hurt and one Turkish girl, but the whole command was upset and the whole U.S. government. As you well know, this prompted the air raid on Qadhafi, trying to get Qadhafi and his family later in the year.

*Q: Did you, by the way, think Qadhafi? What were your assumption when this happened?*

LISSELT: No, we didn't think Qadhafi. We didn't know what to think. We didn't think Russians, though. We thought Middle Eastern terrorism, somehow. And the Qadhafi connection only became clear in time with this chain of people who had been involved in bringing the explosives in and planning the event. It's just a miracle that more people weren't killed. It was a small room with a low ceiling full of 200 GIs and their girlfriends dancing. And the effect in the room was horrendous in terms of the compacting of the noise. People's eardrums were burst; those were a lot of its most serious injuries. It's a miracle that there were so few real injured and only eventually two deaths. One guy died eventually, but he was in the hospital quite some time. Very dramatic, and it hurt the whole community.

Another extremely dramatic thing up there was when the Military Liaison Mission (which ran out of Berlin these intelligence missions with the British and the French into and throughout East Germany) had one of their members apprehended and shot in the field, Major Nicholson, later promoted to colonel. He and his unit were a part of the Berlin family. And that was really an explosive thing, and it was really a gross action. We knew all the details from the commandant, Colonel Roland LaJoie, who's since retired as a two-star, major general, in the U.S. Army.

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Q: But wasn't it the case that some of those probes were a little bit "cowboys"? They tended to play chicken with the East German Volks police?

LISSFELT: Well, they resented such allegations. That came up in conversations with the people who carried them out, and they really would come at you if you used the word cowboy. They didn't consider themselves cowboys; they were risky operations, which they went as far as they could inside East Germany. They went up to sheds to open them up to see if there were tanks in them. And that's what happened on this occasion. Nicholson was apprehended when he was checking out a shed to see if there were tanks hidden away in the shed, and a Soviet sentry, a young recruit, who had been off in the woods relieving himself, came back and, in a panic, saw this MLM car and Nicholson shot him, fired warning shots, I gather, and then shot him. It was just so dramatic and the Soviets handled it badly. They were rude and they accused the man of being where he shouldn't have been. He had every right to be there. There were zones that they could go in. But it was scary. It was provocative. That was one of the most important military intelligence operations carried out from Berlin over the years. Running around all over and finding out all sorts of information about units, size and so forth, by sorting through the trash and the latrines and you name it, from where the Soviets had been out on exercises and with the East Germans. They were looking for any "early warning" signs of preparations of an attack from the East. But they were often involved in incidents, rammings, things like that. It was very perilous, and when you read about it in the newspapers, back here, it must have been a pretty scary event.

Q: Well, Mark, on that note, you wound up some six years in Germany, an extraordinarily long stretch, headed back to the Department and became, if my records are right, the director for Southern European affairs, which spanned Greece-Turkey-Cyprus.

LISSFELT: Right, and it wasn't a post that I sought initially. As a matter of fact, I came out of Berlin when Roz Ridgway, the EUR assistant secretary, and one of her deputies was Jim Wilkinson, who had been her deputy in Berlin, both of whom I got to know even

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better in Berlin and to like and consider them friends. So I could appeal to them for a job in EUR. I asked for an office director job. The only opening was Southern Europe, but having worked on the Arab-Israel problem for some years, I thought, Lord, who need the Greeks and the Turks and the Cypriots? So at first I turned them down and looked around for a period of time, fortunately short enough to learn that there wasn't anything comparable to it. I came back to Williamson to inquire whether the SE job was still vacant. Someone was about to be paneled the day that I phoned in. They stopped the paneling of some poor lad, whom I won't mention, and I was paneled into the job and came back to what turned out to be a rather short stay. I arrived in the late summer of 1986. We moved back into our house in Falls Church, and I plunged in after some visits to the area on the way home from Berlin and trying to steep myself into the intricacies of this relationship, which is as complex, virtually, as the Arab-Israeli and certainly as passionately entwined with domestic U.S. politics. I had 10 months, fortunately, with a deputy who was fresh from Athens named Townsend Friedman, who was so knowledgeable about the Greek side as well as about the whole area that I was doubly blessed.

*Q: A very good friend of mine from Athens.*

LISSFELT: And I knew it every day. I appreciated Towny's help every day. He was a guy skating on thin ice though, because if he didn't get promoted, he was going to be time-in-classed and have to leave the Service. He made me aware of it, and it became my major goal to see that he got promoted. Fortunately, I made some contribution via his Efficiency Report to his success at the end of that year when he was promoted. I made visits to these places which I'd never been to before, Athens and Thessaloniki and then to Ankara, went out from the office on one visit to the USS Missouri for the anniversary celebration of the Missouri's trip at the end of the Second World War to the Bosphorus, when we showed the flag to encourage the Soviets to get out of the Turkish provinces in the east. I also made a trip or two out there with the people from the Pentagon - e.g., Richard Perle - who were

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running all sorts of military exchange programs with them to negotiate a new economic and military aid agreement.

There were constant fracas over the exercise rights of aircraft over the Aegean, the water rights, the occupation of islands. It was one of the biggest cans of worms with the most potential for a blow up that I've ever seen. In that connection, I remember a conversation with a Navy admiral who was going out to Naples to be head of Southern command, Admiral [James B.] Busey, who later became the head of FAA, very nice man. He came to my office and flattered the State Department people by calling on office directors in the office in the area of his responsibility. And we sat down, and we had just had an explosive collision between some Greek hot dog pilots against some Turks. We exercised U.S. carrier pilots in that area, the eastern Aegean. We sat down and chatted, and I'll never forget endearing myself quite by accident to Admiral Busey when I said, "You know, Admiral, I have one nightmare around here, and that is that some hot-dogging" - the Greeks were the worst at this - "Greek pilot is going to crash an American exercising off a carrier in the eastern Med, and all of us are going to be in the soup." And he leaned forward and practically embraced me because it seemed he had the same nightmare day in and day out and was pleased to find a kindred spirit in, of all places, the State Department.

*Q: It was a constant worry.*

LISSFELT: I went out there for a couple of visits. I went to Cyprus, too, and met with the foreign minister, a courtesy call, I thought, but then he proceeded to wipe the floor with me, throwing back in my face various items of testimony that I'd offered to the House Foreign Affairs Committee in a large session. When you're up there you have the representatives of three embassies, Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus, in the background taking notes, and you simply can't win because you're going to offend one or the other. If they say there are too many Turks on Cyprus and you agree, the Turks will kill you. If you downplay the Turk presence, the Greeks and the Cypriots will be at your throat. Well, I'd forgotten what

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I'd said, but he had it verbatim, the foreign minister of Cyprus, and he proceeded to wipe his office up one side and down the other with me. It was the most unpleasant foreign affairs professional experience I ever had in my life. It did not endear the problem or the people to me at all, not to mention the Foreign Minister! But this, as I said, was a very short stint. I barely got to know it. It was a very good office, talented, experienced people doing Greece, Turkey, and Cyprus.

*Q: Monty Stearns was then in Athens?*

LISSELT: Monty, I think, was not in Athens. Robert Strauss-Hup# was in Turkey, and Bob Keeley was in Athens. I forget who was in Cyprus for the moment, but very able, all very professional people, but all with their points of view. The whole thing with the Greeks was the base agreements issue was coming up, and how we renegotiated that. With the Turks it was the constant renegotiations of the DECA, the Defense and Economic Cooperation Agreements.

*Q: And of course coming to grips with the Socialist Papandreou government.*

LISSELT: Well, the Papandreou government. There was a worse experience, I guess, than the Cyprus one I just described, namely, sitting down with the political director of the Greek foreign ministry, a former rag newspaper editor whose name escapes me, fortunately, but who ranted and raved and screamed at me for all the injustices wrought by the American government on the poor, innocent Greeks, including the Greeks who had nothing to do with the attempt to install their man in Cyprus in 1974, which promoted the Turks to invade. So that was a bad experience. And I think I had some bad experiences with the Turks, with Richard Perle staying up all night one night with the man who then came on to be their ambassador in Washington - he was the political director - negotiating the DECA, a negotiation which Perle was leading, very ably, I must say. Perle was very impressed with the Turks, as would anybody be, particularly from the military point of view,



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but they were difficult as could be in negotiations. So in the midst of this, after only two months-

*Q: But you had some questions at home. There was a little thing called the Greek lobby. Were they involved at that time?*

LISSFELT: Yes, it was, of course, as much a part of the domestic scene as the Israelis were, with the Greek supporters, the Greek-Americans, be it Michael Dukakis, Senator Sarbanes, or be it the Greek lobbyists in Washington. There wasn't much of a Turkish lobby that you had to contend with or a Cypriot lobby. There was an able Cypriot ambassador, and a very inept Turkish ambassador, who had been a pugilist in his day and had the temerity as a young man to knock out an American sailor in a friendly combat when we had a ship visiting. It was a famous story in his career, and he was that way in dealing with everybody. He was really a belligerent fellow, married to a German woman, but that was a disaster for their Turkish-American relations. He caused more problems than he solved. The Greeks were led by an extraordinarily able man, the most smooth guy, and he played the Greek-American lobby beautifully, but they were always there, this whole fight about the assistance, the 10-7 aid ratio, the Turkish-Greek ratio, and anything you did for them, everything had to be if it was 7 for the Greeks it had to be 10 for the Turks; if it was 10 for the Turks it had to be 7 for the Greeks, whether you were talking about aircraft or millions of dollars or whatever. We also had upstairs, as one of the under secretaries, a former Congressman from Chicago, whose name will come to me, who considered himself to be the expert in the American government on Greece, because of experience in the Greek community in Chicago. He was constantly contradicting U.S. policy. He went on to head the Veterans' Administration - big beefy guy with glasses, whose name you haven't heard for years.

*Q: Ed Derwinski.*

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LISSFELT: Yes, it was Ed Derwinski, who constantly contradicted us and told the Greeks, you know, one thing, in spite of what the embassy was telling them and we were telling them. It was just total frustration dealing with that under secretary.

Q: Greece had already in '81 taken the decision to go into the European Union, and Papandreou had stayed with that despite some reservations. Greece was perhaps progressively more moving in that direction and away from the close, although critically called "client," relationship with us. Did you detect that kind of a trend in that period?

LISSFELT: Not so. There was a great interest in the area in this questions of membership in the EU, and immense frustration on the part of the Turks, because they knew that they were not going to make it because of a Greek veto, and concern among the Cypriots, too. My recollection is the Cypriots have since gotten in and the Turks have been turned down yet again.

*Q: The Turks have never come forward. The Cypriots are still ohold.*

LISSFELT: But these people attached - at least they said they did - considerable importance to this as a sign of being accepted in the club, and they were constantly frustrated and thwarted by Greek representative sitting within the council throwing out obstructions to, for example, the Turks coming in.

Q: So such a short time in such a great challenging job only means something bigger afterwards, and you got a call to go as DCM in Paris, or engineered that yourself, or how did that play out?

LISSFELT: Well, I don't think it related at all to the experience being responsible for Southern Europe. It just so happened that one day, for whatever reason, the DCM in Paris, Bill Barraclough, resigned from the Foreign Service. He had a non-career ambassador named Joe Rodgers, from Nashville, a big Republican fund-raising leader, very energetic, able guy, but not really very interested in foreign affairs. But he desperately wanted to

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replace Barraclough in five minutes, and he chased down Roz Ridgway somewhere at a meeting and said he needed 20 minutes on the phone with her and laid it out. First I knew of this was a phone call from the director general, George Vest, who'd known me over the years from my NATO connection and so forth, and with that wonderful question: Would you be willing to be among those considered for DCM in Paris? Well, I almost fell out of my chair. This came right out of the blue in the spring of 1987. I hadn't been seven months in the job and back home, just settling in, and I probably would have said no, except, "Paris," I said, "Let me check with my wife, but I'm favorably inclined." And Cindy was, too, as soon as she heard it was Paris, and though we had to pack up in less than a year home and get on our way, we did - we were about a year home - and took our youngest daughter with us for her senior year in high school at the American School in Paris.

I was one of two finalists for the job, and met with Joe Rodgers for an interview, when he did all the talking, a typical interview, you know. I hardly got a word in edgewise. One of the most interesting moments, though, was I knew he was a "born-again" Christian. He was one of several born-again Christians in the administration, and I wondered how he was going to deal with that question. And he started to get a little nervous and he danced around, and I thought to myself, Here it comes. Then he asked me bluntly, "Do you go to church?" It came out that abruptly, and I said, "Well, Mr. Ambassador, the truth is not very often." And he said, "Well, never mind. It's not important." He says, "You may know of my own..." And then he explained his own religious interests. I already knew of his own conversion, which really related to a near-fatal heart attack on the Athens tarmac when he was 40-some years old, which brought him face-to-face with his life, and he became a born-again Christian. Anyway, for whatever reason, I think my old friend Bill Bodde helped this decision. The other candidate Bodde described as having his own agenda, being a hard charger, and suggested to Joe Rodgers that since Joe Rodgers was a hard charger he didn't really want another hard charger down the hall from him. Rodgers saw the logic of that and in a week moment-

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*Q: That's the Tiger-Patsy-Tiger-Patsy school of management.*

LISSFELT: I guess so. I never quite thought of it that way. I got the nod, to my great delight, and we prepared and off we went in the summer of 1987. After just a year home, we pulled up stakes from our house, which we dearly loved, in Falls Church, took our daughter from what would have been her senior year in high school and took her along with us - the other three siblings were by then in college or out of college - and off we went. Joe Rodgers charged me with two thoughts in the course of that interview. "If you come," he said, "I want you to prepare or lead the preparation of a good work annual scheme for work and responsibilities, goals and objectives, that's your sort omission for the embassy. It will have to be a good one. And second to help me reduce the size of the staff." Well, I think we achieved the former, but we didn't do much to improve the latter.

But off we went, very excited after about a month or so of French review at FSI, which was useful, and moved into a wonderful official residence, which is still the official residence, on the Champ de Mars, the Eiffel Tower to one side and the Ecole Militaire on the other, complete with staff and a chauffeur and a driver, which was a great luxury - in Paris it's worth a million dollars - and settled in with a terrific embassy staff. You can imagine, the kind of people who get to Paris, by and large, are the cr#me de la cr#me from whatever agency, 48 U.S. government agencies, it turned out, we had there. That became my major preoccupation, really, sort of listening to them and presiding over their differences.

*Q: Did you feel prepared by previous experience training to suddenl/preside over that complex and far-flung-*

LISSFELT: Well, I must say, I was perfectly relaxed a t the prospect, although I knew that the people I supervised, the section chiefs, all outranked me, by the way. This disparity helped me get promoted after my first year on the job to minister-counselor, fortunately. At least I was on a par with them. But no, I wasn't intimidated by it. On reflection, I'm not sure why. I knew two people there very well. One was the third man in the embassy,

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the economic minister-counselor named Bill Edgar, who was a friend from Bonn and a wonderful guy and very supportive, full of good advice, very practical and sound, and the other one happened to be the defense attaché, this Colonel, now General, LaJoie, who knew me from Berlin. As matter of fact, when Rodgers was making his decision, he asked me if I knew anybody at the embassy, and I said, "Well, I know these two guys. They know me from other incarnations." And I know that he called them, and I'm sure they said nice things. So that helped, plus a very experienced head of the political section named Peter Semler. I liked the administrative guy and we became very good friends in my time there, Bruce Clark. And the Consular Section was run by a good guy and replaced by even better people. So the whole thing was very congenial. Paris also had four constituent posts (Bordeaux, Lyons, Strasbourg, and Marseilles) which I didn't know much about, but I just decided to take it day by day with no preconceptions and to try and be reasonable and supportive of Joe Rodgers, who was there only two years of my four and succeeded by Walter Curley.

*Q: Probably a rather different style...*

LISSFELT: A very different style, a guy who'd been ambassador to Ireland under Jimmy Carter-

*Q: And a New York financier with J. H. Whitney.*

LISSFELT: -and very close to the Bush family. He'd been a roommate of Prescott Bush at Philips Andover Academy. He knew the family very well. He knew more about the family than they cared, but he was close to President Bush. Bush wanted a man in Paris who would work and be friendly with President Mitterrand.

It was a mutual relationship between Mitterrand and Bush ever since Bush got the job, as Vice President, to go to Paris and explain to Mitterrand why the U.S. government was so upset when Mitterrand formed his first government with four communists in it. Mitterrand told Bush in no uncertain terms that his long-term plan was to destroy the Communist

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Party, and he laid it out, what he intended to do, and convinced Bush. Bush went back a believer. And of course, Mitterrand did it, and they had a close relationship ever since.

By the way, Mitterrand and Rodgers haa very good - though they couldn't understand each other, couldn't speak one word - but Mitterrand respected what he'd heard of Rodgers, this self-made millionaire, a man who'd started with nothing and built his own business, Rodgers also made the U.S. government live up to commitments to France in series of phone calls across the Atlantic relating to a thing called the RITA system, a military communications system worth a billion dollars to the French manufacturers, which Ronald Reagan's administration pledged to buy till Margaret Thatcher got a hold of Ronnie and began to twist him and urge him, "Nah [No], don't do that. Take a British system which we're still developing." Rodgers heard about this and apparently went ballistic, over the international open phone lines. Obviously he was heard by the French government arguing for the United States to live up to its commitment - it endeared Rodgers to the French government! He was given he L#gion d'honneur when he left, at the highest level that they can give to a foreigner, at the insistence of Mitterrand. Funny, these two men couldn't have been more different. But Curley came along-

*Q: With a background in France and French.*

LISSFELT: Who?

*Q: Curley.*

LISSFELT: Not so much, but he knew the French in funny ways, from China days, when he was out there in the Second World War an aide de camp for a while to Chiang Kai-Shek, in the Second Marine Division, and he knew all the French ambassador's family, the De Margerys. Robert De Margery was the ambassador in Washington, the son in the family Curley knew in China. Curley knew all the daughters, I think, rather intimately, judging by his winks. But Curley, it turned out, was a Pittsburgher, as am I. We raced, as soon as we heard of Curley's nomination, to the International Who's Who, looked him up,

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saw he was a Pittsburgher, and I waited and didn't say a thing. I was a charg# for seven months from December 1988 to June 1989, by the way, which was pretty exciting stuff at that embassy, with Chirac as the mayor of Paris and Rocard the Socialist prime minister. It was very interesting times, and when the phone rang I never knew whether - and Chirac called me sometimes from the United States, usually in high dudgeon ordering me to do something as if I were a French bureaucrat. Rocard was nicer and very cordial. So that was a great experience, the seven months' interlude. And then Curley was nominated and I waited until he passed the Senate and was named as U.S. ambassador to phone him and introduce myself. I'll never forget the conversation. I was in Paris and he was in New York. I called him to congratulate him. And his first question was, "Where are you from?" And I said, "Well, it so happens I'm from Pittsburgh." And he said after a long pause, "But that's where I'm from." And we really had a lot of chuckles over that. I think that helped me, but to make a long story short, he'd been advised by his predecessor not to accept, necessarily, the DCM in place, but to consider him along with other candidates whom the Department might put forward, and be free to choose his own man, in effect.

*Q: Advised by his predecessor-*

LISSFELT: Joe Rodgers, yes. Which was kind of a slap in the face to me, but never mind. Fortunately, the Office of Western Europe Affairs was run by Ed Casey, a wonderful guy and good friend, who said to Curley, "Okay, if you want to do that, we'll get a list together," and they started doing it. "But why don't you start with the guy in place, who is a kind of a benchmark, if you like." And I went back, went to Washington, went up to New York for an interview, went to Curley's office at Rockefeller Plaza. This doesn't have much to do with French relations, but it's very-

*Q: It's very interesting.*

LISSFELT: -to Rockefeller Plaza, and we went to lunch at the Racquet Club over on Park Avenue - I think it's Park Avenue - with him. He liked me because I liked oysters. We had

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oysters on the way in and we sat down and we talked, and we must have had a half an hour together, Mr. Ambassador and Mr. Lissfelt, and chitchat about Pittsburgh friends and cousins and "What about Pittsburgh?" and "What do you know?" and the Department and so forth. Half an hour into that conversation he reached out his hand across the table, "Let's do it. You be my DCM." The chemistry was immediately right and I believe remained so during our two years together.

Q: Ha, ha, ha. Great. That's great!LISSFELT: That was during the first luncheon course. You don't know how I enjoyed that lunch.

Q: *Oh, I'll bet.*

LISSFELT: One of the first questions he had after lunch was the whole connection of the prayer breakfasts which his predecessor had organized as a born-again Christian. Apparently, every day, people (staff and others) would go to the ambassador's residence for prayer breakfasts, which he fostered and paid for. Joe Rodgers and his wife, Honey, very sweet people, both of them born-again Christians. And Curley had a letter from Mr. Rodgers recommending that he continue this practice. He handed me this letter, and he said, "What's your reaction to that?" I replied, "Oh, Mr. Ambassador, that's an entirely personal thing. That's entirely up to you. It certainly has nothing to do with your official responsibilities as American ambassador to Paris. He said, "Thank you." It was a great relief. He practically did everything but wipe his brow. The result: no more prayer breakfasts.

Anyway, that was the start of a wonderful relationship that doesn't usually exist between a political ambassador and a career deputy. And the Curleys Cindy and I count among our friends, and we established a relationship that we'd go off once a month. One would choose a restaurant and just the four of us would go off and chitchat about staff, about the Department, about life, about everything. And the Curleys became very open and good friends. I had mixed feelings about leaving at the end of his being there only two years, but



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I'd been there four, and you know what things are like. They're cyclical, and after a while you say, "Who needs another goals and objectives exercise for the Department?"

Q: But thinking back on it, you count yourself lucky to have two political ambassadors. That gave you, as the FSO DCM, more - you were more indispensable. Had you had career types it would have been less of a challenge, right?

LISSFELT: Perhaps. I saw all the advantages of having them. First of all, Rodgers could call the White House and would call the White House and go back and grab somebody by the throat on the White House staff until he could see the President if he got his dander up about something. And people did not mess around with Rodgers in his territory, you know. We used to have visits by Supreme Allied Commander-Europe, who didn't consider he was beholden, an American general, in any way to an American ambassador in Paris, but he came regularly to talk to the French military about their role, and he was very careful there. He always paid a call on Rodgers, very deferential, because Rodgers was a tiger on questions of turf. His rights and responsibilities. The closest thing to a reprimand I ever got from him was signing off on a cable to Jerry Bremer, who headed the terrorism office, saying we hoped that he found the ideas in this cable of interest and we of course would be interested to hear his in return, which we would give due consideration - something like that, something innocuous. But Rodgers thought I was entirely too deferential, since we knew best what would go in France, and told me not to forget it.

Walter Curley was very close to President Bush and wrote him notes all the time. He had a secret way of getting access to him. He put Bush's middle name at the bottom left corner of the envelope, "Walker," and it would be shown in to the President. These guys were note-writers. I think that New England prep school training must have had something to do with it. And he could call, and would call Brent Scowcroft or whomever - never bothered the President, that I'm aware of, rarely. But the possibility was there, and Mitterrand knew it. Curley was introduced to Mitterrand up at Kennebunkport, when Mitterrand came on a state visit, and Bush had him up there for a few days, and he had Curley come up, before

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he went to Paris, I think it was, and put his arm around him and said, "This is my old friend Walter, and I'm sending him to you, Francois, and he's got my ear." So Curley came so highly recommended. As it turned out, he didn't get very involved in policy, and seldom went near the foreign ministry. I seldom went near the foreign ministry - but more than he did - but the guys who were the counselors liked to work their contacts, and I would go occasionally to the political director, one of whom was totally inept, but the second one is now the second man in their foreign ministry - Bertrand Duforque is his name, very able guy.

Anyway, it was a great experience, but working with the French is never dull. But they agreed with us on more things than most people ever knew. For instance, in the terrorism field, we worked together splendidly. And when in 1991 it came time for the dust-up in the Middle East about Desert Storm and the preparations therefor, what very few people know is that when the U.S. requested the basing in France of air tankers to facilitate flying and refueling of planes, the French agreed right away to base them down near Toulouse in Southwest France, and they soon had an airfield loaded with great, big American tankers there. Now, most people don't know. They only know about their turndown on the request to overfly and to go hit Qadhafi in 1986, but we constantly made this pitch to people when they came through, everybody from Colin Powell to cabinet level people - Dick Thornburg, whom I'd known from Pittsburgh days - who was the Attorney General. There were more areas of agreements. We had our problems with the French, and you have to be careful with the French. You have to show them the courtesy of asking their opinion on things. Because they like to think they have good ideas and they often have. Some of them often said, "We're not always wrong, you know." I heard that first from the second man in the Foreign Ministry, to Newt Gingrich in a CODEL, who told him, "You know, Mr. Gingrich, the French are not always wrong." And everybody chuckled, but you know, there is a message. But they could be difficult. One of the best contacts, by the way, was Peter Semler's, at the Elysée is the current foreign minister, Hubert Vedrine. His father had been a one-time colleague of Mitterrand. Mitterrand was devoted to Vedrine the young boy, who

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was the spokesman at the Elys#e Palace and now, as a socialist, has been brought back to be the foreign minister, about a year ago, a very able, very nice guy. He spoke rather good English.

Q: Well, Mark, I'm having trouble picturing your day. There you're sitting at the top of this giant edifice, the embassy in Paris, you're trying to supervise, you said, 48 U.S. agencies that are producing a mound of daily reports in all channels. You are receiving probably more visitors to Paris of a high level that need care and feeding than most other posts, maybe any other posts? How can you manage that and feel on top of it?

LISSELT: Well, the day you feel on top of it is the day you're out of touch. But first of all, you get to know, I got to know, right away the subordinates, and knew whom I had to watch and whom I could trust without a question. I had complete faith in Bill Edgar and his successor, and a key part of the whole economic side of things, complete faith in the commercial attach#, a very good guy out of the commerce department, same thing in the consular area. Peter Semler had a very good bunch of people in the Political Section. Sometimes they'd write some goofy cables that you had to watch out for, every once in a while, but not often. By and large, we had this team that was very reliable and very solid. My biggest problems probably came with the successor defense attach#, an admiral in the navy who had come right from working for the Secretary of the Navy and had been promised an aircraft carrier group when he left Paris (which he went on to get). He was a super-activist guy. He was the son of a Foreign Service officer who spoke very good French because he'd gone to French [schools] as a kid, in France with his family, and he quickly established close relations with Mitterrand's military advisor, who happened to be a navy admiral too, and there was stuff going back and forth there that I don't know the half of, I'm sure. Some of it shouldn't have been passed at all. Some of it was State Department traffic. We know that for a fact, because they blew up over a few of them and wiped them in our faces, but I did save him on one occasion around the time of the Gulf War. We were sharing with the French, Mitterrand, at the highest level, satellite and overhead photography. It was being sent to the embassy, and this guy was putting

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it together in satchels and taking it over to the military attach# and going in to brief the President and showing him these targets and so forth. And I asked him, I said, "Phil, let me see what you're taking?" And sure, fine, he came down with the valise and opened it up (I had the right security clearances and could look at it.). It turned out to be something totally unrelated. It was the wrong set of photographs, and I looked at it, and I said, "Wait a minute, Phil. This has nothing to do with what they're interested in." I don't know what it was, but it's absolutely irrelevant. "You can't go in and show it to the President of the Republic." And he was just aghast, and I'd saved him from a huge gaffe. And he raced upstairs and got the right stuff, and off he went. But I'll never forget that, so I always felt that I'd done him a favor on that score. But he was very active and considered himself a political-military officer and, really, I think, certain days thought he had my job. These were the days of classified faxes entering the scene too, so written communications were going back and forth in a classified channel between Washington and the embassy which I had no knowledge of, between all agencies and their home offices.

Q: Were your days foreseeable? You must have been jerked about by visitors, filling in for the ambassador here and there, entertaining, all these things..

LISSFELT: They were foreseeable, barring a crisis. The first thing I did was look at the overnight cable traffic and see whether certain instructions were out there, most of which the Political Section had long since read, or the economic, section and were on top of, but I just had to be sure of that. My major concern was the staff meeting with the ambassador which we had almost every day and being sure people knew what he wanted and watching out that nobody was getting at cross-purposes with him. But I went home for lunch most days and, when there were visitors in town or whatever, did a certain amount of entertaining at home (we had a wonderful chef) and most usefully on behalf of other embassy officers who wanted to impress their contacts and get their contacts out for some nice event and not in a restaurant. So there was a certain amount of that.

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The evening stuff I picked and chose among myriad possibilities. I did not slavishly accept every diplomatic invitation that came along. I decided right when I first arrived, the calls that I made were limited to allies, the NATO Alliance, and I also called on the Egyptian because he called on me and one or two others, but I picked and chose there. I just wasn't going to go off - I wasn't interested in it, and it was too fatiguing and often a big waste of time. I did go to many of their national day receptions, if for no other reason, to see the facilities in which they worked. It was fascinating to see some of the old palaces and so forth in Paris.

There were a lot of things that came my way that the ambassador didn't want to do. Relations with the whole Cincinnati Society headquartered in Paris, which meant a couple of annual dinners and things like that. That's okay. And a lot to do with the American community and the American Chamber of Commerce whose president was one of my good friends, John Crawford, who lived right across the street from me. He's a wonderful guy. And a lawyer in Paris, so there's a certain involvement there, but generally you got a schedule of events, and you went in each day and asked "We're still here?" "Yes, we're still here" was the constant reply.

But we had certain real concerns about security in Paris, by the way. People can't grasp that, but there is a huge Mediterranean and Northern African population in and around Paris. People were very worried about Palestinian terrorists, about Qadhafi, because of the proximity, not so far away, across the Mediterranean. And there were scares, and we had to spend time briefing embassy staff. Spouses and families were brought in. There were a whole series of world events when things would heat up, and you had to try and maintain a modicum of reasonableness about protecting the embassy.

One thing I instituted there was the first fire drill they had in the embassy in the time anybody could remember. We learned in that fire drill that because of the security measures and the placing of steel plates across windows and barring the windows, there was only one door out which people were going to go. Six hundred people in that building

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were going to go out the front door of that building, which was as wide as this table. And that was rather scary. The weirdest thing on the security front was when somebody went up a building adjacent to us, right up to the top floor, went across the gutters on the top, climbed over onto our roof. First thing I knew, I was sitting in my office and there were papers fluttering down the front of the embassy. It turned out that this guy, who was a publicity hound, had arranged to have television out front filming all this, came and sat on the balustrade above the ambassador's office, one floor up, throwing these copies of his poetry off the roof. He had done the same thing in Marseilles and was known. But it was obvious to us: somebody could have come up there, come across that roof and shot us or thrown a bomb right in. So we had to build a special little memorial fence up on the roof for that.

Q: It's such a big embassy, Paris isn't necessarily an easy place for the junior officer. Were you able to have a watching, mothering brief with that whole pack?

LISSELT: Well, I did, and there were, oh, I don't know, if you added up the CIA contingent and some of the other agencies, we had at least 30 people whom you could call junior officers. I tried to get them to organize themselves (and they did better with some people than others) and had them out to the house for at least an evening occasion. It started with a bull session, which turned out to be pretty stale, and then we had them out for a spaghetti dinner when they could bring their young French contacts. That was okay. Some of them had French contacts. I was always available to them, and I took interest in the embassy's language program, too. One junior officer came in and complained to me that it was dead, and I hadn't paid attention to it, and he helped me revive it. But they knew I was supportive in onward assignments questions and reviewing statements for any of their work, and I really paid a lot of attention to how they were supervised.

I had huge numbers of efficiency reports to write, as well as ratings on many of the people from other agencies. And ones that the ambassador should have written himself but he had me write and that he would sign, for instance, on that same defense attach#, who was

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quite a handful. But I gave him high marks. I did it one year and the next year I said to the ambassador, that's one I can't do. And Curley said, "Come on, just do it." So I did it - but grudgingly. That's a big occupant of your time, too.

There was a lot of stuff that had to do with internal organization and working with other agencies, and when all the time their visitors came and you had to see their official visitors from Washington and you had to keep an eye on them you had to try and bring them along with the rest of embassy policy. You had to know when to ignore them and leave them to their own devices. We had a whole building full of what we called "the cops," you know. We had the FBI; we had the Secret Service; we had DEA - all in one building separate from the embassy compound.

*Q: You probably managed by "cluster," by justice cluster, intelligence cluster-*

LISSELT: I didn't manage them as much as maybe I should have, but—I know—more than they wanted. I got to know their chiefs, and my door was always open to them. I paid a call on them in their offices to see where they were located. It was outside the building. And I kept touch with the important ones. The DEA chief was a very responsible guy who helped us with our drug problem at the American school there, which is another entity outside Paris that we were kind of responsible for, although we contributed very little to it, in terms of money. And the CIA. I haven't mentioned the CIA, which was a huge presence, is a huge presence, not only official in the embassy, but in France. I got on well with the two station chiefs that were there. One of them is still a very good friend here in the Boston area, Chuck Cogan, who came back and did his Ph.D. under Stanley Hoffmann at Harvard University and wrote his thesis on DeGaulle in French. He was a very able guy. But I never kidded myself that they told me everything that was going on.

The most difficult chores I had to do in my memory related to personnel matters in Paris. Two of them related to French employees, one an assistant protocol officer, a woman, who, it turned out, had been dumped on the embassy by USIA, where she had given very



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bad service (USIS I guess it's called overseas), and was rude to me and to my wife. She was supposed to support me and my wife. It took us a year, counseling her, and lining up written complaints against her service before, under French law, we could fire her without having a lawsuit on our hands.

The other one was much more serious and was the assistant to the legendary Johnny Berg, the head of the travel office in Paris, who, it turned out, this rather flamboyant woman, was working for us and for French intelligence. Now she didn't have access to classified information, but she certainly saw every visitor or knew of every visitor and CODEL and submitted regularly the visitors list to French authorities, which gave them, we know, targets for the operations which they were famous for carrying out in hotel rooms, rifling people's baggage, and attach# cases. So it came to the point where we had to issue warnings, anybody coming to France, not to leave any classified, important, information unguarded in their hotel rooms or wherever. But it was a hairy experience to get this woman, whom we, to make a long story short, confronted at the same time investigators who came from Washington to do this confronted her daughter, who worked for the OECD - I think it was OECD, maybe it was for COCOM - as an auditor, financial person. And when they confronted the daughter, she broke down and confessed that finally she had the chance to unburden herself of something she'd known for years, the perfidy of her mother. The interrogator called me over to the one who was talking to her mother and told him, so they could play these two off, and in fact got the woman to resign and leave. Fortunately, it turned out very well. It could have been a sticky thing, because she was very good friends with a lot of people on Capitol Hill whom she had helped on hundreds of CODEL visits to Paris. She had a lot of friends, and letters from Strom Thurmond and many other distinguished American congressmen and senators. We got her to go away, and never made a stink until, later, she did go public and the French government later gave her a job working for the French national industry Renault automobile. But this was a person right in our midst for years, and we were glad to see the back of her head leaving the embassy.



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Q: Mark, I've watched the voice power meter as you've been speaking about France and it's been much higher than in the earlier sections of your career. I assume this was probably the post that excited you most, the one that you felt your greatest challenge and contribution.

LISSFELT: Yes, when anyone asks me what was my favorite post in the Foreign Service - same thing with my wife - we always say we had two favorites: one of them early in our career was Tel Aviv, for a lot of different reasons related to the age of our children, the climate and so forth, after being in London, but certainly Paris was the high point, in what I consider to be the best job the Foreign Service has to offer, almost barring any, to a career person. We enjoyed it, worked hard, Cindy established good relations with many French people, and certainly enjoyed the professionalism of our staff and the work aspect which certainly was, day in and day out, considered to be important. Again, I keep coming back to that, but that's what makes all the difference in the world, when you're pushing the papers and doing the work, to have some feeling that it relates to something important.

Q: It's a job, certainly, that's its own reward. In years past it was also a platform to ambassadorships. Going through it you probably felt it was its own reward.

LISSFELT: Well, I did, and I still do. It's alumni have a very uneven record, what happens to people after a job like that or the DCM in Bonn, for that matter, or other places. Back in Washington and in the bowels of Personnel, certainly, you are considered to have had your reward in this life, and if you come back thinking that, like many of our European friends, you step right from that DCM job to a good embassy job somewhere around the world - my colleagues, the British and the Canadian, particularly close colleagues, did just that - forget it. Very seldom happened. Jack Maresca did get the title of ambassador, but he didn't go on to be ambassador. The current ambassador in Bulgaria, Avis Bohlen, succeeded me, and with all her talents had, I think it's frank to say, certain other advantages working on her behalf as well, although I always told Walter Curley, when he asked me who should succeed me (I didn't want to get involved in that), that of all the

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candidates that I knew of, she was far and away the most qualified, and she did a great job. But that was the exception to the rule, I think. Chris Chapman retired. Sam Gammon, I think, went as ambassador to Mauritius, but more and more it's "You'd better be satisfied with that as your reward," although I did leave it, coming back and while there, doing a certain amount of lobbying and inquiring to find what was coming up. And I was called by personnel to be put on as filler, later, on new lists for various jobs, for example, the ambassador to Romania, for whom I knew they already had a candidate, whom I'd met before. He went there, in fact, and four years later died of cancer, in the saddle, as a matter of fact, as I recall.

So I decided that four years would be enough. My wife agreed entirely, although I think if we'd gone to Curley and asked to stay on, he would have said, "Yes, stay as long as I'm here." That's a presumption on my part, but I think it's well founded. We decided that four years, the cycle, as I said earlier, even in Paris, is repetitive in a certain way, and it's time to do something else. And we wanted to come back home. Again I began to hope that the phone would ring, maybe, with an offer back in Washington, when it was known that that was my desire. When I had been on home leave, I went in to meet the new director general and his deputy, whom I didn't know at all, succeeded George Vest and Bill Swing, Ed Perkins and Larry Williamson, respectively.

I had a very startling experience with Perkins. He was new to the job, and I got talking to him about my future, and he told me, first of all, he said, "You know, Mr. Lissfelt, your extension there in Paris was very controversial" (to stay on an additional two years), and I said, "No, I never heard that at all. I thought, in fact, I helped the Department solve a problem with a new political ambassador." And he shook his finger in my face. He said, "Mr. Lissfelt" - and I'll never forget this - he says, "Don't you get greedy. We try to turn those jobs over." Then he perhaps felt bad about what he'd said - I was so shocked, I was mad - and he said, "Now we do try to give people who come out of these responsible jobs and do well another responsible job, to be sure... " blah, blah, blah. But nothing ever came of that, and I found myself, as the fourth year was winding down, with no specific

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prospect, except to leave in the summer of 1991, it would be, and come back as just another supernumerary senior officer in the Department, walking the halls with, then, 30 or 40 others like that, and I could not face that prospect, so I began to look for something specific, which is when I heard that at FSI - which kind of attracted me, because I knew they were going to move from the old incarnation to the new campus, where they are now, at this wonderful location out there in Arlington, it could be interesting to be part of that. The deanship for the biggest part of the school, the language school, came open when Mary Ryan, who was to go to that job, suddenly was asked to be a deputy assistant secretary of the European Bureau, opening the job. I called Brandon Grove, the director of the Institute, whom I'd known from my first job in the Foreign Service. He said, "You're my candidate." It happened almost that fast. And back I came and started in August. I had this great big organization teaching sixty-some languages, \$9 million budget, and helping them prepare for the move two years later to the new campus, where we all lived happily ever after.

*Q: That was, in a way, a wonderful period. We were there together, and it was a very nice team we had.*

LISSFELT: It was an extraordinary team. I liked the earlier team, but then Vlad Lehovich had come along to head the political studies, Larry Taylor became the new director, an inspired choice - and very much persona grata in the Department. John Sprott was succeeded by Doug Laingen, who was an old and experienced friend, and the whole place kind of hummed, especially when we got to the new, gorgeous campus, which is so nicely done, so well done that it's almost inconceivable that it's a creation of the Department of State, of the U.S. government. It's really a wonderful physical facility, which does some good teaching. Whether it lives up to its capacity yet or has, it's still a young place. I don't know what's going on now. I've lost touch since retirement. I stayed there four years, as you recall, and retired in 1995, just after finishing 35 years in the Department of State,

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maximizing my retirement benefits and deciding - all that came together - it was time to retire and move on.

Q: You were very involved in the difficult nexus between training assignment and promotion in the Foreign Service that's never been well put together, but that's a battle I remember you fought a good deal.

LISSFELT: Day in and day out. I had two good deputies in there who were civil servants, David Argoff and Gary Crawford, who'd been around and been at this a long time, and knew how to work the Department. The unique thing about me is that I was a Foreign Service officer and could talk to Foreign Service officer students who came in with complaints or outrageous requests or suggestions better than anybody else's. But to try and plug in training - be it language training be it area studies or whatever kind of training to people going to a post, in the complexities of the assignment process and the moving from one place to another - was always and will always be - by the way, in every foreign service - a challenge.

Q: *You were managing a staff of hundreds of people teaching 60-*

LISSFELT: -62 languages-.

Q: *-different nationalities-*

LISSFELT: -and then we had to take on these whole ten new languages, at least, when the Soviet Union fell apart, and about places that we didn't even have maps or dictionaries or any written materials. We sent teams out that went through there, at some peril, to bring back stuff.

Q: *And you were running four overseas language schools.*

LISSFELT: Four overseas language schools, which are always vulnerable to the budget axe, one in Tunis, which is where the Beirut Arabic language training ended up after the

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Six Day War. It was thrown out unceremoniously from the Middle East, as you may recall, and the only Arab country that would take them in was Tunisia of President Bourguiba, an old friend of the United States. Constant complaints about "Why are you teaching Arabic in Tunisia? You're getting wrong accents and intonations and everything," but actually it worked as well as it could. Also I had one in Taipei, Seoul and in Yokohama. And talked about doing something in Beijing, but in my time we never did, although I understand now we have a man now in Beijing, one of my former colleagues at FSI. The problem in Beijing was that the Chinese were all for having FSI training in the PRC. But they insisted that they would choose the teachers; we couldn't abide that. I was among the first in years to visit the overseas schools, at Larry Taylor's insistence, even though the budget was tight. We could not argue, we could not defend maintaining these posts which a dean or nobody from the school had visited in five years or more. And that was interesting for me, a first trip to the Far East, that whole experience, East Asia, call it.

Q: This didn't equal embassy Paris, but it was a pretty darned complex management challenge to deal with so many categories of people, to field the requests you must have gotten from congressmen and senators for language training, to set up on short notice individual training for ambassadors. It was, in a sense, a diplomatic post.

LISSELT: That's true, and when you talk about ambassadors, it's new American ambassadors going out to posts, and trying to accommodate them, some of whom were very good language learners, some of them were not at all gifted, and to find the right teacher and find the right person, they were always sent to me in the training course they had at FSI. Any question relating to language, they were referred to me personally, and Larry Taylor, nicely, always gave me credit as the director of the institute for never hearing a complaint about the language training that these people got. Either they were so embarrassed by their lack of progress or they were so satisfied that we had done and they had done the best that could be done in a short period of time. So that was a source of satisfaction, and sorting out difficulties - about people and the language requirements for promotion and even staying in the Foreign Service - was also very heart-rending often,

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and we had to try and bend the rules and accommodate people and make sure the system could accommodate people, because the system had its rules and tended to be vicious.

But we worked very well with Personnel, although when I first arrived at FSI, you may remember, because you came into it at the same time, Dick, FSI was at war with the personnel system. The director of FSI and the director general couldn't tolerate each other. They couldn't be in the same room, barely. And their staffs took their signals from the top men. The relationships changed entirely when Genta Hawkins - Holmes became the director general and Larry Taylor became [FSI director]. They became firm buddies and we worked hand-in-glove more often with the whole assignment process. That was a source of great satisfaction. We also anticipated things like the resumption of contacts with Vietnam, and early on I'd lined up teachers, and we had to gather materials, because we could see it coming a year off, and we were really ready with seven or eight teachers to train up people to go back to Vietnam. It had been a huge program, of course, at the time of the Vietnam War.

Q: Well, Mark, as we wind down this last section on training, I remember you used to have wonderful advice for the junior officers in the A100 that you would deliver in very frank terms to them. Many of them will read these oral histories. Do you want to give that in a nutshell?

LISSELT: Well, it was a great pleasure to be invited to give the harangue, usually with some other person, the part of the A100 course that dealt with the DCM: "Who was a DCM, and how do you live with him?" Our current ambassador to Nairobi and I often shared the platform together. She had been DCM in Senegal. I'll think oher name in just a second.

Q: *Prudence Bushnell.*

LISSELT: Prudence Bushnell, of course. Names don't come in front of this microphone very well. She came from a smaller embassy, and I was the bigger embassy, and she'd do

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her spiel. We didn't contradict each other; it was just a different perspective. And they were just bug-eyed, these kids. They weren't kids, but they were kids to the Foreign Service. And my whole spiel - it was just after the time of the movie Schindler's List - and I had what I called "Lissfelt's List" of 10 points of advice-

*Q: I remember that.*

LISSFELT: -the last one of which was what I always considered to be the most important, after telling them this that and the other thing. And the last bit of advice was, of all things, "Be yourself." Don't try to be what you imagine a diplomat is supposed to be; just be yourself, honestly. And we had great discussions, and I must say I enjoyed that a lot, and I think people appreciated it, whether they learned it or remembered any of it, who knows?

Q: I'm sure they did. Well, Mark, this has been a very good interview, and we thank you for taking this time. I sense behind this really sweeping career that you've outlined, there's also been a very strong woman. We haven't had as much to talk about Cindy's opportunities, but I know she's contributed a good share of so much of all of this.

LISSFELT: Well, thank you for reminding me to say something about that, because it's absolutely vital in my case. We've been married 38 years. We were married in 1960 and came in the Foreign Service in 1960. She had been at Fletcher School, actually as an undergraduate at Jackson, waiting in the dining room of the Fletcher School, where I was a graduate, so she had seen two or three years of people coming through this training for the Foreign Service, but in spite of that, she married me and came into the Service and was a strong right arm throughout and in so many ways I haven't even got time to list them. But perhaps one of the most important ones is the intuition, judgment, that women have about people. I found her uncanny in seeing things, sensing things, that never occurred to me and that turned out to be absolutely vital to relationships, attitudes, what was on people's minds. And she bore and has raised with me four children, who are all of sound body and reasonably sound minds, with a real thick layer of French in

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their brain and an attitude of tolerance that I think is a unique contribution that a Foreign Service experience gives to children of Foreign Service officers. I don't regret the career for one second. I would do it all over again, quite the contrary. I left enthusiastic about the friendships, the colleagues, the experiences, but knowing that 35 years was enough of doing almost anything and ready to say goodbye to it and get out of the way for the next generation and see what the rest of life would bring to me.

*Q: Including directorship of the World Affairs Council in Boston.*

LISSELT: Ah, yes. An experience with the non-profit world which came my way after we moved here to Boston. For the first two years here, I was executive director of that organization, trying to interest people, rekindle interest in foreign affairs, remind people that the Cold War was over but there are other problems out there. There are all kinds of frustrations that go with working with non-profits trying to continue people's interest in international relations. It's a real challenge.

*Q: Well, Mark, thank you very much.*

This concludes the oral history interview with Mark Lissfelt on October 30, 1998 conducted in the Pusey Reading Room of the Harvard Club, 374 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston, Massachusetts,

Land of the bean and the scrod, Where the Lowells still speak only to the Cabots And the Cabots speak only to God.

End of interview